DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 538 EC 309 407

AUTHOR Miller, Shazia Rafiullah; Gladden, Robert M.

TITLE Changing Special Education Enrollments: Causes and Distribution among Schools. The State of Chicago Public High Schools: 1993 to 2000.

INSTITUTION Consortium on Chicago School Research, IL.

SPONS AGENCY Joyce Foundation, Chicago, IL.; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL.; Spencer Foundation, Chicago, IL.

PUB DATE 2002-06-00

NOTE 61p.

AVAILABLE FROM Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1313 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637 ($10). Tel: 773-702-3364; Fax: 773-702-2010; Web site: http://www.consortium-chicago.org. For full text: http://www.consortium-chicago.org/publications.

PUB TYPE Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; *Disabilities; Disproportionate Representation; Educational Change; *Enrollment Trends; High Schools; Incidence; *Low Income Groups; *Neighborhood Schools; Regular and Special Education Relationship; Secondary Education; *Special Education; Special Needs Students; Urban Education

ABSTRACT

One of a series of monographs on the performance of Chicago public high school students from 1993 to 2000, this publication examines the upward trend of special education enrollment in high schools. This corresponds with a systemwide redesign of high schools in the 1995 implementation of high stakes accountability. It notes that the enrollment of students with disabilities in ninth grade increased from 11.5% in the 1993-94 school year to 16.4% in 1999-00. Although the proportion of students with disabilities who were retained rose only slightly, the proportion of general education students who were retained or sent to an Academic Preparatory Center rose dramatically. Students with disabilities were heavily concentrated in neighborhood high schools (rather than selective admissions, charter, small, or extended elementary schools). Eleven neighborhood high schools, all on probation and located in areas with disproportionately high levels of low income residents experienced an increase in students with special needs (from 16% to 30%) during this period. The overall growth of special education enrollment resulted in the increased separation of students with learning disabilities from general education students. Seven appendices provide supporting statistical detail. (Contains 16 references.) (DB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

CHANGING SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENTS:
Causes and Distribution Among Schools

ED 473 538

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J.Q. Easton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Shazia Rafiullah Miller
Robert M. Gladden

June 2002

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CONSORTIUM ON CHICAGO SCHOOL RESEARCH © 2002

Acknowledgments

This study would not have been possible without the incredible work and support provided by other analysts at the Consortium. We thank Elaine Allensworth, Holly Hart, Julie Kochanek, Stuart Luppescu, Jenny Nagaoka, and Todd Rosenkranz for their experience and assistance. Also thanks to the Consortium directors and Steering Committee for their helpful comments and guidance.

Rita Brusca-Vega, Rod Estvan, Sue Gamm, David Mayrowetz, Don Moore, Angela Perez Miller, and Arie Van der Ploeg provided key background information and insights on earlier versions of the report.

We appreciate the terrific work of Rose Sweeney, Sandra Jennings, and Pat Collins for all of their assistance in creating the finished product. Also thanks to John Booz for his beautiful photographs.

This study was made possible by the Joyce Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation which provided essential grants supporting our core research.

Changing Special Education Enrollments: Causes and Distribution Among Schools

The State of Chicago Public High Schools: 1993 to 2000

Shazia Rafiullah Miller

Robert M. Gladden

June 2002

Series Summary **1**

I. Collision Course: Special Education and Chicago School Reform 5

II. The Relationship Between the CPS Promotion Policy and the Growing Special Education Population 9

III. How Are Students with Disabilities Distributed Among High Schools? 17

IV. The Story of Eleven Struggling High Schools 23

V. Ninth Grade English Classrooms: A Snapshot of Classroom Integration 31

VI. Serving Students with Disabilities Under Chicago School Reform: Implications and Concerns 37

Appendix I. Sample for Each Analysis 42

Appendix II. Defining Students with Disabilities and Determining Their Grade in School 43

Appendix III. Impact of Student Transition on Special Education Enrollment in Neighborhood and Vocational Schools 44

Appendix IV. More Elementary Students Classified as Eligible for Special Education Services 46

Appendix V. Impact of Area Student Transitions on Special Education Enrollment in High Change Schools 47

Appendix VI. Percent of Eighth Graders with Disabilities Retained: 1993 to 2000 49

Appendix VII. Percent of Ninth Graders with Learning Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: Core Academic Subjects 50

Endnotes **51**

References **53**

Series Summary
The State of Chicago Public High Schools: 1993 to 2000

THE WAVE OF REFORMS THAT FIRST HIT THE CHICAGO Public Schools in the late 1980s focused primarily on greater local control over schools. During this period (Phase I), there was considerable improvement in Chicago public elementary schools. Change in the high schools, however, was minimal.

Beginning in 1995, a second wave of reform (Phase II) focused on strong mayoral control, high stakes accountability, and increased attention from system administrators. Phase II included the systemwide redesign of high schools.

This series tracks the performance of Chicago public high school students from 1993 to 2000 using data from the last two years of Phase I reform as a baseline for looking at the first five years of Phase II. Each report in *The State of Chicago Public Schools: 1993 to 2000* series makes up part of a comprehensive picture of how high schools changed under Phase II. This report examines the rise in the percent and number of students eligible for special education services and their distribution across schools. *Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes* shows how student performance has changed on a variety of measures. *Declining High School Enrollment: An Exploration of Causes* tracks changes in high school enrollment and explores possible causes.

Enrollment and Distribution of Special Education Students

Changing Special Education Enrollments: Causes and Distribution among Schools examines in detail the upward trend of special education enrollment in high schools. The enrollment of students with disabilities in ninth grade increased substantially over the period of our study, from 11.5 percent in the 1993–94 school year to 16.4 percent in 1999–00. During this period, a larger percentage of elementary students were identified as having learning disabilities, particularly in the later grades. Although the proportion of students with disabilities that was retained only rose slightly, the proportion of general education students that was retained or sent to an Academic Preparatory Center (APC) rose dramatically. Moreover, students with disabilities were heavily concentrated in neighborhood high schools (rather than selective admissions, charter, small, or extended elementary schools). Eleven neighborhood high schools, all on

probation and located in areas with disproportionately high levels of low-income residents, experienced an especially large increase in their enrollment of students with special needs—from 16 percent in the 1993–94 school year, to 30 percent in 1999–00. The overall growth of special education enrollment across the system resulted in the increased separation of students with learning disabilities from general education students in high school classrooms, especially in schools where a larger proportion of students with disabilities was served.

Other Reports in the Series

Student Performance

Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes shows that in recent years high school eligible students in Chicago's public schools improved on a number of measures. **These trends exist even though we include in our analyses the students who dropped out of school between eighth and ninth grade, or were sent to APCs.** More students were on track their first year after elementary school (received no more than one failing grade in a core course and had enough credits to assume sophomore status on time), passed the algebra-geometry sequence by the end of their second year, and passed an honors class sometime in their first year. Somewhat more students also completed a college preparatory program and passed an honors or advanced placement course over four years. The percent of students graduating by age 18 rose slightly, and the percent of students dropping out by age 18 fell slightly. Finally, the average score on the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) rose substantially for the subset of students who enrolled in the ninth grade.

Overall, this is good news for Chicago public high schools—students' likelihood of succeeding in school has increased. At the same time, this "good news" is qualified by the fact that student performance itself, even by 2000, was still very poor on most measures. Fewer than half of all students graduated, barely half were on track after their freshman year, and the dropout rate remained above 40 percent.

When measuring the effects of high school reform policies, the news is mixed. Policies aimed at bringing in better-prepared students appear to have worked well and account for much of the improvement in student performance. The system's redesign of high schools in 1997, however, appears to have had only a modest impact on increasing the rate of the development of students' skills. The rates at which students stayed on track, passed the algebra/geometry sequence, and completed a college preparatory program appear to be, in part, due to something besides better prepared students. On the other hand, improvements in graduation rates, and the increase in the frequency with which students took honors and advanced placement courses, seem to have occurred primarily as a result of students leaving elementary school better prepared for high school.

No particular *type* of school (neighborhood, vocational, charter or small, extended elementary, or selective admissions) was especially effective at improving students' performance on the TAP; individual schools from each category stood out. When looking at dropout rates, however, there is a noticeable pattern. Charter schools had substantially lower dropout rates after controlling for the characteristics of their incoming students. Selective admissions schools also did well. While APCs generally had mixed results, a few had more success than expected in keeping their students from dropping out.

Declining High School Enrollment

Declining High School Enrollment: An Exploration of Causes documents changes in high school enrollment from 1993 to 2000 and examines why they occurred. Analysis shows that the introduction of the promotion gate policy to CPS elementary schools in the 1995–96 school year had a profound effect on high school enrollment. As lower achieving eighth-grade students were re-

tained or sent to APCs, the size of ninth-grade cohorts shrank. Successive grades were affected as smaller cohorts moved through high school. The better-prepared students who did make it to grade nine were less likely to spend more than four years in high school than in the past, thereby further depressing enrollment. As a result of this reduction in high school course repetition, the increase in eighth-grade retention was not accompanied by a decline in graduation rates by age 18.

The Unexpected Consequence of Reform Policies

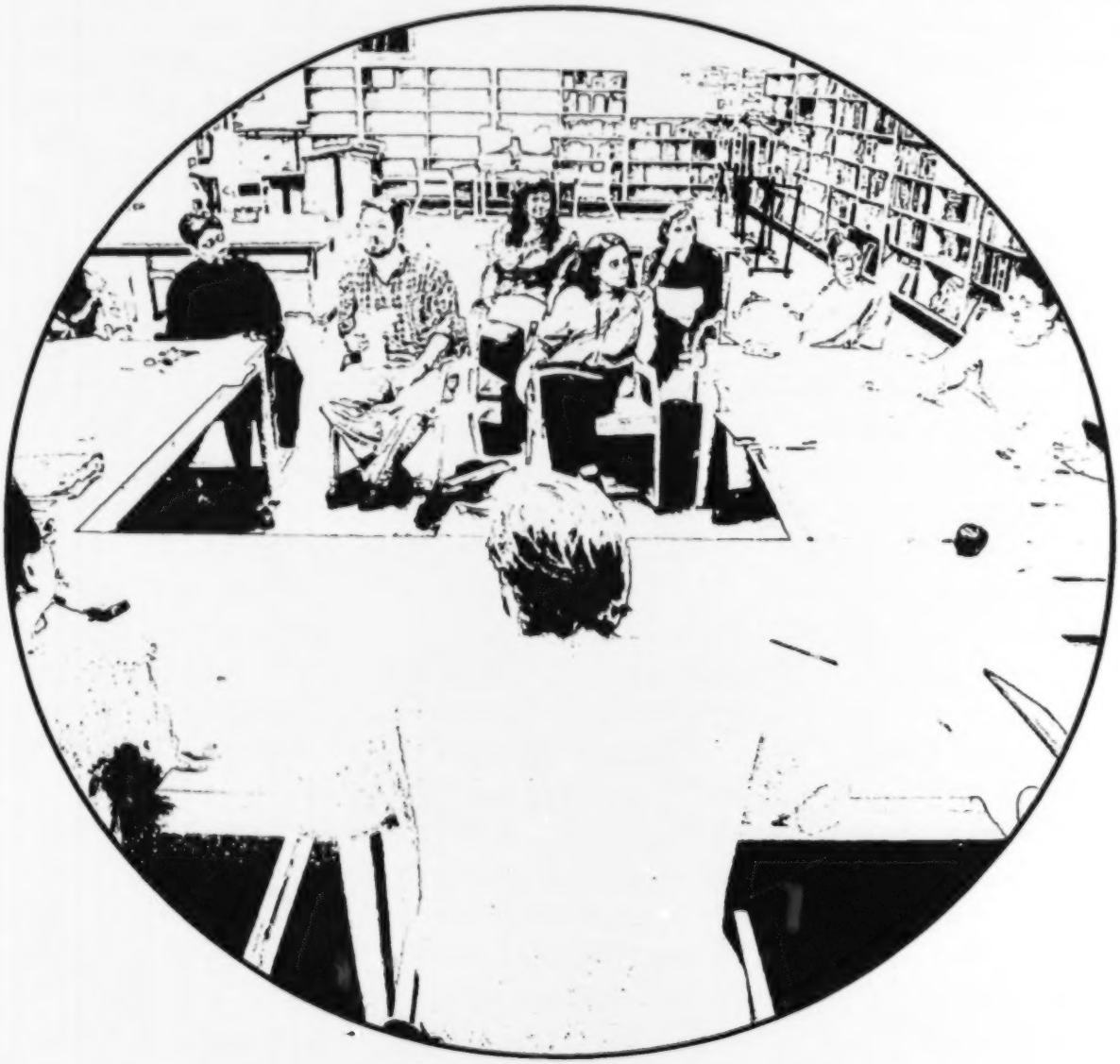
Looking across the reports, we see that some of the most dramatic changes in CPS high schools between 1993 and 2000 were the consequences of changes in CPS elementary schools. This is especially pronounced when looking at the long-term impact of the eighth-grade promotion gate adopted by the system in 1995–96.

One of the anticipated consequences of the policy to end social promotion was a student population better prepared to cope with the demands of high school. In *Student Performance*, trends in graduation, course-taking, and test scores all show improvement, much of which is attributable to better-prepared students in the high schools. On the other hand, *Declining High School Enrollment* shows that high school enrollment declined substantially between 1993 and 2000 due in part to fewer students passing the promotion gate and, because those who did enroll were better prepared and less likely to repeat a grade, students moved through the system more quickly. In *Changing Special Education Enrollments*, we see that although the general education students who enrolled in high school were better prepared, they comprised a smaller percentage of incoming ninth graders. Because relatively fewer general education students were being promoted, high schools enrolled a greater concentration of students with disabilities. This is especially true for those high schools whose traditional enrollment was made up of mostly low achieving students who were not passing the promotion gate. The higher concentration of students with disabilities made their inclusion in general education classrooms more complex and difficult.

The reverberating effects of the eighth-grade promotion gate show that before the system adopts a policy to prompt change in the elementary schools, it should be considered in light of its possible long-term effects on high schools.

New Information on CPS High Schools

Outcomes for the 2000–01 school year show no substantial difference from the trends presented in these reports, with the exception of the distribution of students with disabilities being significantly less focused on neighborhood high schools. Updated data for 2000–01 will be posted on the Consortium's website (www.consortium-chicago.org). A planned fourth report in this series will look more specifically at the climate inside high schools. The projected date for this report's publication is January 2003.



I. Collision Course: Special Education and Chicago School Reform

THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A learning or developmental disability is rising across the country.[1] Chicago's growing population of students with disabilities is, in some ways, no exception to this general trend.

At the same time, a unique set of circumstances—the convergence of elementary and high school reform policies, along with the settlement of a class action suit regarding the system's adherence to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—sets apart Chicago public high schools and the experiences of their students with disabilities. Chicago's situation brings into relief questions of national significance about the long-term impact of federal IDEA legislation, high stakes accountability, teacher shortages, professional development in special education, and the quality of services received by students with special needs. Along with other topics in this series, it reinforces the need to consider elementary school reform policies in terms of their potential effects on high schools.

Between 1993 and 2000, the proportion of ninth graders enrolled in Chicago public high schools identified as having a disability rose from 11.5 to 16.4 percent.[2] In the 1999–00 school year, 87 percent of students with disabilities were concentrated in neighborhood and vocational high schools. Across the high schools, ninth graders with learning disabilities increasingly took first-year English classes separately from their non-disabled peers, often in classrooms where 75 percent or more of the students were eligible for special education services. The sharp rise in the number of students with disabilities in the Chicago public school system, and the disparity in their distribution among different types of high schools are the byproducts of the accumulated effects of distinct reform efforts.

Mapping Reform Efforts

In the early part of the 1990s, decentralized reforms set in motion improvements in the elementary schools, which in turn may have had positive effects on high school students' performance.[3] In the series report *Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes*, the authors show that much of the improvement in high school student performance may be attributed to the better preparation of Chicago public elementary students.[4] Policies to end social promotion and increase school accountability for student learning adopted in the latter half of the decade may have also contributed to these positive trends. In 1996, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) began an ambitious initiative aimed at

ending social promotion and raising student achievement. Its centerpiece is a set of promotional cut-off test scores for third, sixth, and eighth graders. Students in these grades must achieve a minimum score on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in order to be promoted to the next grade. Those who do not meet the criteria are required to participate in a special summer school program, Summer Bridge, and retake the test prior to the start of the next academic year. Students who fail again may be retained or sent to transitional schools called Academic Preparatory Centers (APCs).

Concurrent with the reforms in the elementary schools, in 1997, the Chicago Reform Board of Trustees adopted the *Design for High Schools*, a systemwide plan that called for a general restructuring of schools to promote more intimate and supportive learning environments and more rigorous graduation requirements. A number of selective admissions, charter, and small schools were also opened at this time.

Response to Corey H.

As these reforms were taking place, in 1998, the Chicago Reform Board of Trustees settled a class action lawsuit brought on behalf of the parents of 53,000 CPS students with disabilities and represented by lawyers from Designs for Change and the Northwestern University Law Center. The suit charged that Chicago public school students with special needs were being illegally separated from their non-disabled peers in schools and classrooms, and that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) had failed to end this practice. Under the IDEA, students with disabilities must be educated in the least restrictive environment that meets their educational needs. Settlement agreements required that CPS and ISBE undertake a number of actions to bring about school-by-school compliance. Under this settlement, CPS actively encouraged students with disabilities to attend high schools other than special education schools.

Accumulated Effects of Reform

Over the period of this study, the accumulated effects of these different reform efforts—a general improvement in elementary schools, the implementation of the promotion gate policy, and the creation of new high schools—culminated in several related outcomes: 1) students leaving CPS elementary schools better prepared; 2) more general education students being retained in the eighth grade or entering APCs; 3) more general education eighth graders responding to increased educational options and enrolling in selective admissions, charter and small, and extended elementary schools instead of their neighborhood high schools; and 4) a growing population of students with disabilities attending neighborhood high schools. In this report, analyses show that implementation of the promotional gate policy corresponded with a sharp rise in special education classification in the gate grades and a rise in the

number and percent of eighth graders eligible for special education services. Furthermore, because students with disabilities were not necessarily subject to the promotion gate policy—they must meet the requirements of their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to be promoted—more students with disabilities passed into high school, and more general education students were retained or sent to APCs. For eleven neighborhood high schools, a quarter or more of their entering ninth graders were eligible for special education services in the 1999–00 school year. In several, the population of ninth grade students with disabilities exceeded 30 percent.

In this report we examine the relationship between the institution of promotion gates in the elementary schools and the rise in the population of students with disabilities. As in the other reports in this series, we look at how this policy affected the population of students entering ninth grade, and how enrollment changes in different CPS high schools were impacted by the creation of new high schools. We also examine the distribution of students with disabilities within high schools, looking at the concentration of students with learning disabilities in first-year English classrooms.

II. The Relationship between the CPS Promotion Policy and the Growing Special Education Population

BETWEEN THE 1993–94 AND 1999–00 SCHOOL YEARS, THE percent of eighth graders with disabilities in Chicago public schools increased steadily, growing from 13.0 to 16.9 percent.[5] As almost nine out of 10 students enroll in a CPS high school directly from a system elementary school, an increase in the percent of eighth graders with disabilities translates into a similar increase in the ninth grade.

Indeed, during this period, the percent of ninth-grade students identified as eligible for special education services rose from 11.5 to 16.4 percent (see Figure 1).[6] Ninth graders with disabilities also rose in number between the 1993–94 and 1999–00 school years, from 3,453 to 4,307. At the same time, CPS high schools experienced a decline in their total ninth-grade enrollments; the number of entering ninth graders fell from approximately 30,000 in 1993–94 to just over 26,000 in 1999–00.[7] The combination of the growth in the number of students with disabilities and the decline in the size of the ninth-grade class resulted in a higher percent of students with special needs enrolling in CPS high schools.

Students transferring into and out of the system between eighth and ninth grade had little effect on the concentration of students with disabilities. In fact, students entering CPS high schools from outside the system slightly reduced it. Between the 1994–95 and 1999–00 school years, about 10 percent of CPS ninth graders were new to the system. Of those students, only about 8 percent were classified as eligible for special education services when they entered the system, a rate much lower than the CPS average. Although the percent of students with disabilities that transferred into the system increased slightly during this period, it remained lower than the percent of students enrolling directly from a CPS elementary school.[8] As a result, newly enrolled students reduced the overall concentration of ninth graders with disabilities by about one percentage point between 1994–95 and 1999–00 (see Appendix III). During this same period, the proportion of students with disabilities and students in general education that left the system or dropped out between eighth and ninth grade remained relatively stable and so had no impact on the high school special education population.

Students with Disabilities Identified in Gate Grades

The timing of the increases in the percent of elementary students eligible for special education services suggests a systemic response to Chicago's promotion policy—there was a large jump in the identification of students with disabilities after the policy was introduced in 1996–97, especially in

the gate grades (see Figure 2; see Appendix IV for detailed numbers).[9] For instance, during the 1993–94 school year, the percent of sixth graders with special needs rose from 14.2 to 15.2, or by one percentage point, and 302 more students were identified as having a disability. In contrast, over the course of 1999–00, the percent of sixth graders with disabilities rose from 14.9 to 17.3, or by 2.4 percentage points and 731 more students were identified. There is a similar pattern in the third and eighth grades.

A Growing Percent of APC Students Identified

During the 1997–98 and 1998–99 school years, only 1.7 percent of APC students were identified as having a disability (see Figure 3). This percent increased dramatically by 1999–00, when 14.6 percent of students enrolled in APCs were classified as eligible for special education services over the course of the year. The increase in the percent of students identified in their last three years of elementary school and in APCs (where all students are age 15 or older) is especially troublesome given that provision of specialized services early in a child's school career greatly improves that child's learning outcomes.[10]

Are Students Identified Before or After Taking the ITBS?

The high incidence of students identified as having a disability in the gate grades has two possible explanations. On the one hand, teachers in the gate grades may be recommending their academically weaker students for special education evaluation because they notice special needs or are trying to help these students bypass the gate. Students with disabilities are subject to the promotion policy; however, school staff may also establish alternate promotion criteria in students' IEPs. On the other hand, teachers in these grades may be identifying students as having a disability after they fail to pass the gate and are retained. In this case, poor test performance alerts teachers to the possibility that the student has a special need, or it raises the concern that the student may be retained twice.

Analysis supports the latter explanation. Students enrolled for the first time in the third, sixth, and eighth grades were no more likely to be classified as eligible for special education services after the promotion policy was implemented than before (see

Determining Eligibility for Special Education Services*

REFERRAL: Student is formally referred by a teacher, parent, or other relevant adult. The parent must consent to an evaluation. If the student is referred by a parent and no evaluation is determined necessary, reasons must be provided to the parent in writing.

EVALUATION: Child is assessed in all area related to the suspected disability (e.g., medical, social and emotional status, academic performance).

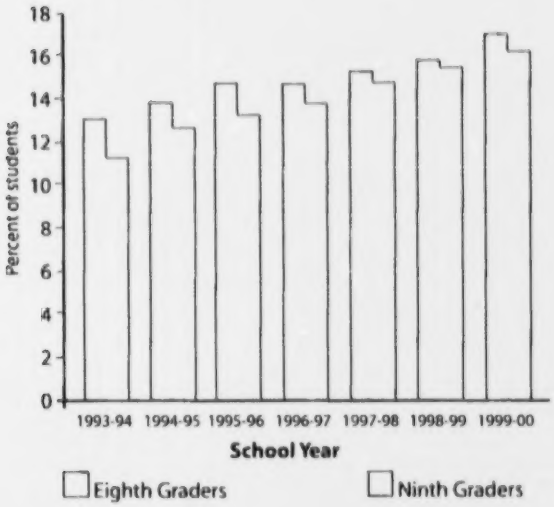
ELIGIBILITY MEETING: School staff summarize and interpret the documents and assessment results to determine eligibility. Parents are involved.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MEETING: If the student is determined eligible for special education or related services, an IEP is developed for the student. The IEP must be reviewed and revised each year.

*Illinois State Board of Education (2001).

Figure 1

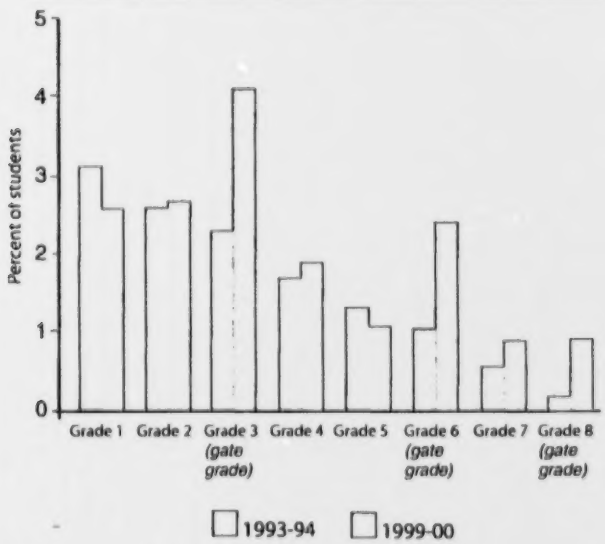
Greater Percent of Eighth and Ninth Grade Students Eligible for Special Education Services



	8th graders	9th graders
1993-94	13.0	11.5
1994-95	13.9	12.5
1995-96	14.6	13.2
1996-97	14.6	13.7
1997-98	15.3	14.8
1998-99	15.9	15.8
1999-00	16.9	16.4

Figure 2

Rise in Classification of Students with Disabilities in the Gate Grades

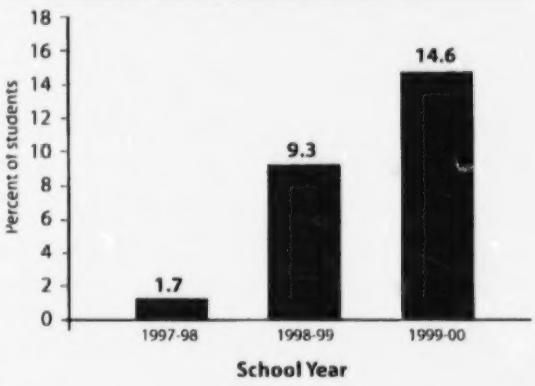


	1993-94	1999-00
Grade 1	3.1	2.6
Grade 2	2.6	2.7
Grade 3	2.3	4.1
Grade 4	1.7	1.9
Grade 5	1.3	1.1
Grade 6	1.0	2.4
Grade 7	0.6	0.9
Grade 8	0.2	0.9

Figure 4).[11] However, the percent of students identified as having a disability after they were retained jumped dramatically between the 1993–94 and 1999–00 school years—from 5.6 percent to 13.3 in third grade, from 3.7 to 13.1 in sixth, and from 1.7 to 4.2 in eighth. In 1999-00, the rise was caused in part by the Board encouraging schools to evaluate students retained two or more times. These increases also coincide with a significant jump in the number of students retained. **As a result, the growing percent of retained students with disabilities translates into a growing number of third, sixth, and eighth graders with disabilities.**

Figure 3

Greater Percent of APC Students Classified as Eligible for Special Education Services



Numbers	
1997-98	818
1998-99	1,250
1999-00	1,252

What Type of Disabilities Were Identified?

The increase in the percent of ninth graders eligible for special education services is almost entirely the result of an increase in the percent of students identified as having a learning disability (see Figure 5). Between 1993–94 and 1999–00, the percent of ninth graders with learning disabilities increased from 7.2 to 11.4. By 1999–00, seven out of every 10 students classified as eligible for special education services had a learning disability. During the same period, there was little change in the percent of students with other special education classifications.

The rise in the percent of learning disabilities may be problematic because this special education category is defined by some of the least understood and most contentious criteria. Specifically, research suggests that poor early education can lead to students being diagnosed as learning

Federal Definition of Learning Disability

The term "specific learning disability" is defined as **a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding and using spoken or written language**. This may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, motor handicaps, mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.*

A team may determine that a child has a specific learning disability if the child does not achieve commensurate with his or her age and ability levels, although the child has been provided with appropriate learning experiences, and there is a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability.‡

---

*_Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997_

‡_Federal Register_ (1999)

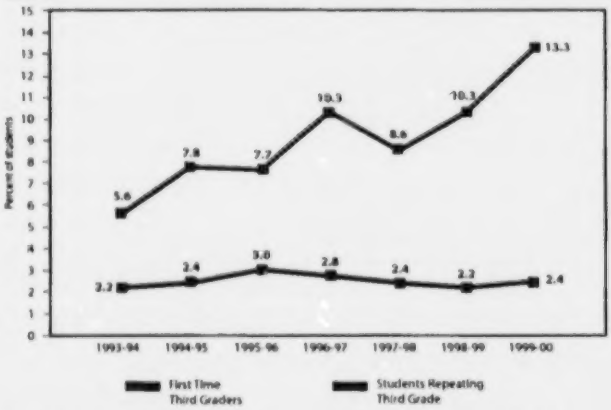
disabled later in their academic career.[12] Also, critics have raised the concern that low achieving students may be incorrectly classified as learning disabled because of the broad definition of the disability; it is difficult to determine whether low achievers lacked adequate instruction or other opportunities, or have some other "internal" processing difficulty.[13]

Effects of Eighth-Grade Promotion Gate on General Education Enrollment

Under CPS's promotional gate policy, eighth-grade students must meet a minimum cut-off score on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) in order to be promoted from the third, sixth, and eighth grades. Students who do not meet the cut-off are required to attend the Summer Bridge program for intensive instruction in reading and math. If they do not meet the cut-off when they are retested in August, and if the system does not pass them after considering grades, attendance, and other factors, they are either retained in their current grade or, if they will be turning 15 by December 1 of that academic year, they are sent to an APC. Because students with disabilities were not necessarily subject to the promotion gate policy—they must meet the requirements of their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to be promoted—more students

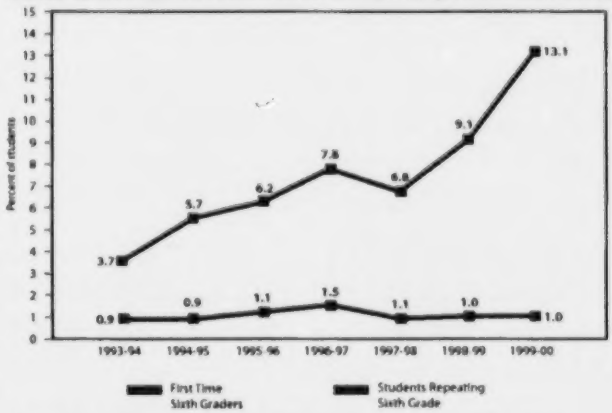
Figure 4

Retained Third Graders Increasingly Identified for Special Education Services



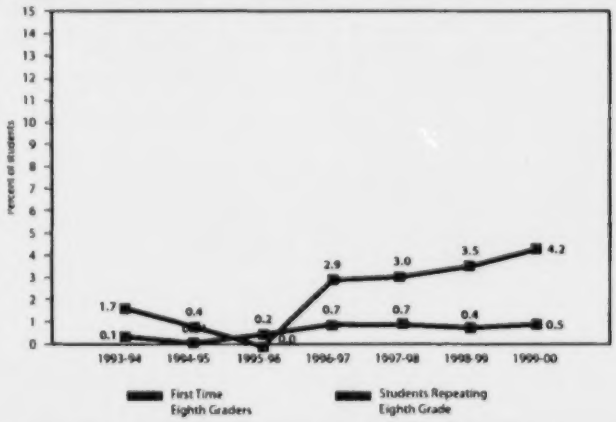
Number of Students		
	First time	Retained
1993-94	28,652	645
1994-95	28,439	488
1995-96	29,105	466
1996-97	30,033	903
1997-98	30,162	5,126
1998-99	31,693	6,283
1999-00	32,504	5,483

Retained Sixth Graders Increasingly Identified for Special Education Services



Number of Students		
	First time	Retained
1993-94	26,873	377
1994-95	26,153	318
1995-96	27,584	324
1996-97	27,664	637
1997-98	26,797	3,276
1998-99	27,054	3,391
1999-00	25,784	3,169

Retained Eighth Graders Increasingly Identified for Special Education Services



Number of Students		
	First time	Retained
1993-94	25,119	605
1994-95	24,193	695
1995-96	23,863	740
1996-97	23,037	1,740
1997-98	23,614	1,749
1998-99	22,569	1,875
1999-00	24,076	1,416

Figure 5

Students with Learning Disabilities Drive Increase in Special Education Enrollment

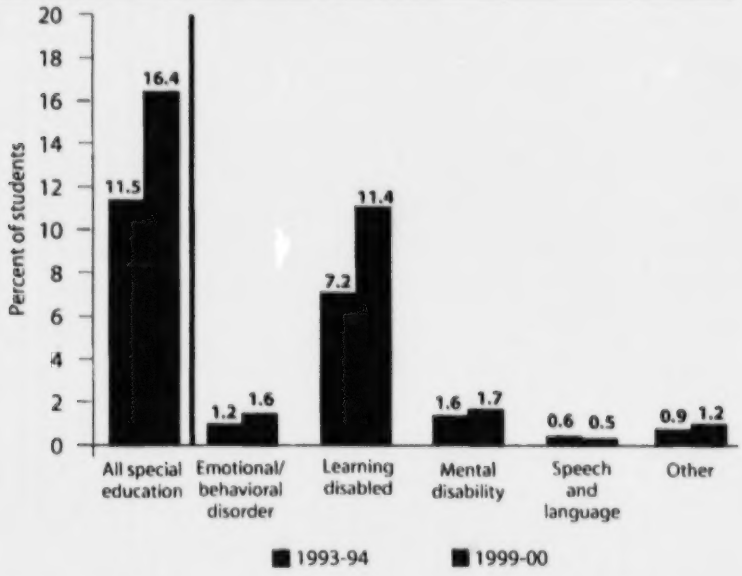
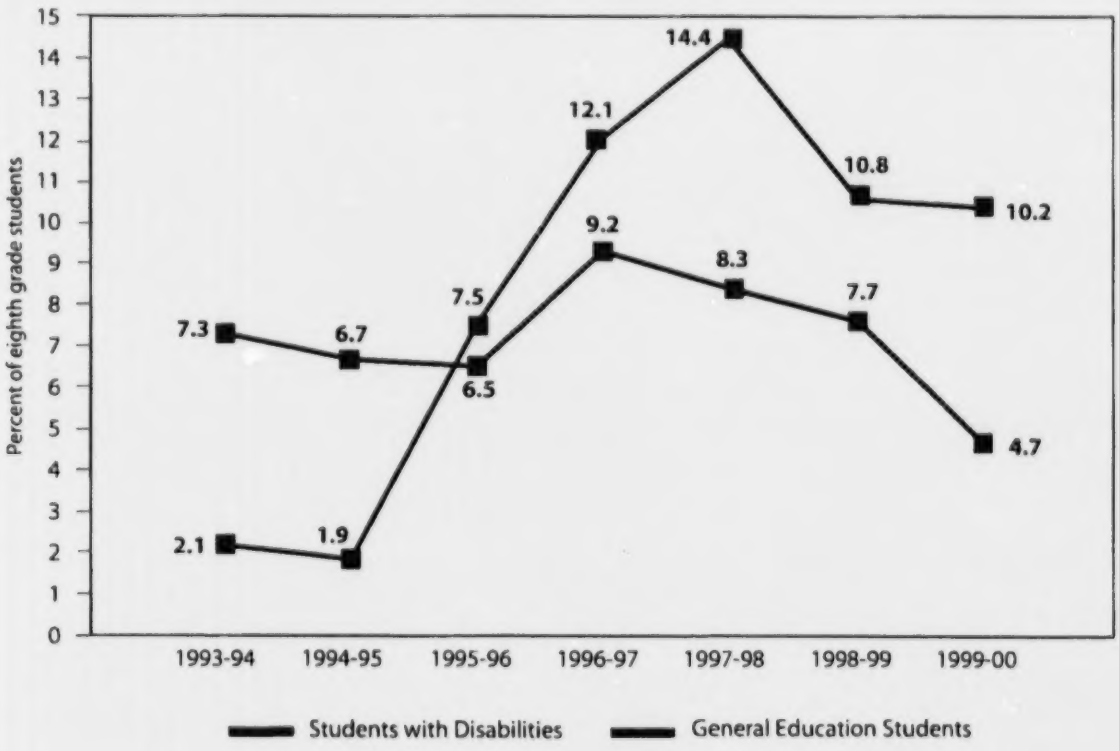


Figure 6

Higher Proportion of General Education Students Retained



with disabilities passed into high school, and more general education students were retained or sent to APCs.

Because the retention rates for students with disabilities remained relatively stable after the implementation of the promotion gates, it appears that promotion decisions for students with disabilities were based on other requirements than those in the promotion policy. Before the system adopted the policy in 1995–96, eighth-grade students with disabilities were retained at a higher rate than general education students (see Figure 6).[14] After the gate was implemented, this situation reversed; at first, the rate of retention for students with disabilities rose from 7.3 to 9.2 percent, but then it fell to 4.7 percent by 1999–00. At the same time, general education students were substantially more likely to be retained; their rate of retention rose from 2.1 percent to a high of 14.4 percent, and then fell again to 10.2 percent by 1999–00. Because there are many more general education students than students with disabilities, the increased percentage of retained general education students led to a substantial reduction in the number of general education students entering high school. As a result of these changes, the proportion of ninth graders with disabilities rose.

When looking at the second year of the promotion gate policy, one might expect that the proportion of students with disabilities that entered ninth grade would drop as general education eighth graders who were retained or enrolled in APCs passed into the ninth grade. This did not occur, however, because many of these eighth-grade students left the system, dropped out, or were retained again.[15] Also, a growing proportion of APC students were identified as eligible for special education services. As a result, there was no subsequent influx of general education students, and the concentration of students with disabilities in the high schools remained high, even after the promotion gate policy had been in place for several years.

III. How Are Students with Disabilities Distributed Among High Schools?

BETWEEN 1993 AND 2000, THERE WAS A SYSTEMWIDE increase in the percent of eighth-grade students eligible for special education services in Chicago public elementary schools. At the same time, Chicago joined a national trend in the specialization of its high schools. Over the period of this study, there was a proliferation of enrollment options for high school students.

New selective admissions and extended elementary schools opened. Some schools were converted into career academies, others into technical preparatory schools. Also, six charter high schools opened under the 1996 Illinois Charter Schools Law. When making their post-elementary-school plans, eighth graders were encouraged to explore educational options outside of their traditional neighborhood high schools.

These two phenomena, along with the system's promotion gate policy, greatly affected the distribution of students with special needs in high schools. Of the 58 high schools that were in operation throughout the period of our study, 21 had one in five or more of their incoming ninth graders eligible for special education services in the 1999–00 school year. By comparison, only one high school had a similar concentration of students with disabilities in 1993–94. Conversely, in 1993–94, nearly half of the 58 schools had less than 10 percent of their students eligible for special education services. In 1999–00, only one-fifth did.[16]

Distribution of Students Among Different Types of Schools

In this report, we categorize high schools into six different types: neighborhood, vocational, charter, extended-elementary, selective admissions, alternative, and special education. Schools are categorized according to their admissions criteria, missions, and patterns of special education enrollment. During the period of this study, the overwhelming majority, nearly 89 percent, of ninth graders with disabilities attended neighborhood and vocational high schools (see Appendix III). The enrollment of ninth graders with disabilities in charter, extended-elementary, and selective admissions remained low, despite a slight increase. Between 1993 and 2000, the percent of ninth graders with disabilities enrolled in charter and extended elementary schools grew from almost zero to 2 percent of the system's total; the percent enrolled in selective admissions schools grew from 1 to 3 percent; and the percent in alternative schools grew from 1 to 2 percent. Special education

schools saw a decrease in their enrollment of ninth graders with disabilities, dropping from 8 to 6 percent, probably as a result of the system's response to the Corey H. settlement.[17] Since neighborhood and vocational schools enroll the vast majority of the system's special education population, they absorbed the bulk of the increase in the number of entering ninth graders with disabilities. Of the 854 additional special education students (up from 3,453 to 4,307), around 675 were enrolled in neighborhood and vocational schools in the 1999–00 school year.

High School Options and General Education Students

If students with disabilities and general education students were distributed evenly across the different types of high schools, each school would have had about 16 percent of their entering ninth graders eligible for special education services in 1999–00. This would have been around a 5 percent increase from their 1993–94 levels. In actuality, however, neighborhood and vocational schools experienced slightly larger increases in their special education populations (around 6

How High Schools Were Categorized

Although **NEIGHBORHOOD** and **VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS** had slightly different proportions of students with special needs, both changed in similar ways between 1993 and 2000, and so are grouped together for most of the analyses in this report. Neighborhood high schools have no admissions criteria (although there may be requirements to enroll in honors or other special programs) and serve students from the surrounding community. Students living within the attendance area are by default assigned to that school unless they elect to enroll elsewhere. Although vocational high schools may have some admissions criteria and are officially open to students throughout the city, they tend to serve just their neighborhood populations. Slightly over half of all neighborhood and vocational high schools were on academic probation during the 1999–00 school year; three opened after 1993–94.

EXTENDED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS are grade schools that include a ninth grade; they generally enroll freshmen from their own eighth-grade classes. Extended elementaries are intended to ease students' transition to high school. All of these schools opened after 1993–94; none were on probation in 1999–00.

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOLS are not allowed to use admissions criteria and are exempt from many of the district's rules. All of these schools opened after 1993–94; they are not subject to the same accountability standards as other CPS high schools.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS serve student populations in special circumstances, including students who are pregnant and parenting or incarcerated. These schools are not included in school-by-school analyses because their populations are highly unstable. Like charter schools, they are not subject to the same accountability standards as other CPS high schools.

SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS HIGH SCHOOLS have no attendance boundaries and very competitive admissions criteria. During the period of this study, these schools admitted few students with disabilities. The number of selective admissions schools grew from four in 1993–94 to nine by 1999–00; none were on probation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS have student populations of over 50 percent special education. Between 1993 and 2000, there were six speciation education schools; two were on probation in 1999–00.

percent). This resulted in high proportions, above 18 percent, of students eligible for special education services in these schools in 1999–00. This increase did not result from a shift in the distribution of the system's students with disabilities—it remained about the same throughout the period of this study—rather, **the increase was caused primarily by a change in the distribution of students in general education.** General education students were enrolling in selective admissions, charter, and extended elementary schools instead of neighborhood and vocational schools. School-specific rates of special education enrollment for 1999–00, and changes in their populations of students with disabilities between 1993 and 2000 demonstrate this pattern (see Figures 7 and 8).

As the number of selective admissions high schools increased (they doubled in number between 1993 and 2000), so too did the percentage of general education students attending these schools; it rose from 8 to 13 percent (see Table 1). The percent of students with disabilities attending these schools changed little, however; selective admissions schools continued to enroll roughly 3 percent of the system's growing special education population. When combined with the effects of the system's promotion policy and a general decrease in high school enrollment, the percent of general education students enrolled in vocational and neighborhood high schools fell by 10 percent, from 24,217 in 1993–94 to 17,940 in 1999–00, a drop of more than 6,000 students.

Table 1: Percent of General Education Population in Neighborhood Schools Falls Substantially

	Percent of System's General Education Students			Number of General Education Students		
Type of School	1993-94	1999-00	Percent change	1993-94	1999-00	Number change
Neighborhood and Vocational	90.9	81.4	-9.5	24,217	17,940	-6,277
Selective Admissions	7.8	12.5	4.7	2,075	2,759	684
Charter and Extended Elementary	0.1	3.2	3.1	24	706	682
Alternative	0.9	2.8	1.9	244	610	366
Special Education*	0.3	0.1	-0.2	70	28	-42

* In 1999-00, the system classified Spalding as a general high school although it was classified as a special education school in 1993-94. Because over 50 percent of Spalding's students were eligible for special education services in 1999-00, however, the Consortium classifies it as a special educational school. Some students attending Spalding are not eligible for special education services. This explains why some students enrolled in special education schools do not have a disability.

Figure 7

Percent of Students Eligible for Special Education Services in 1999-00

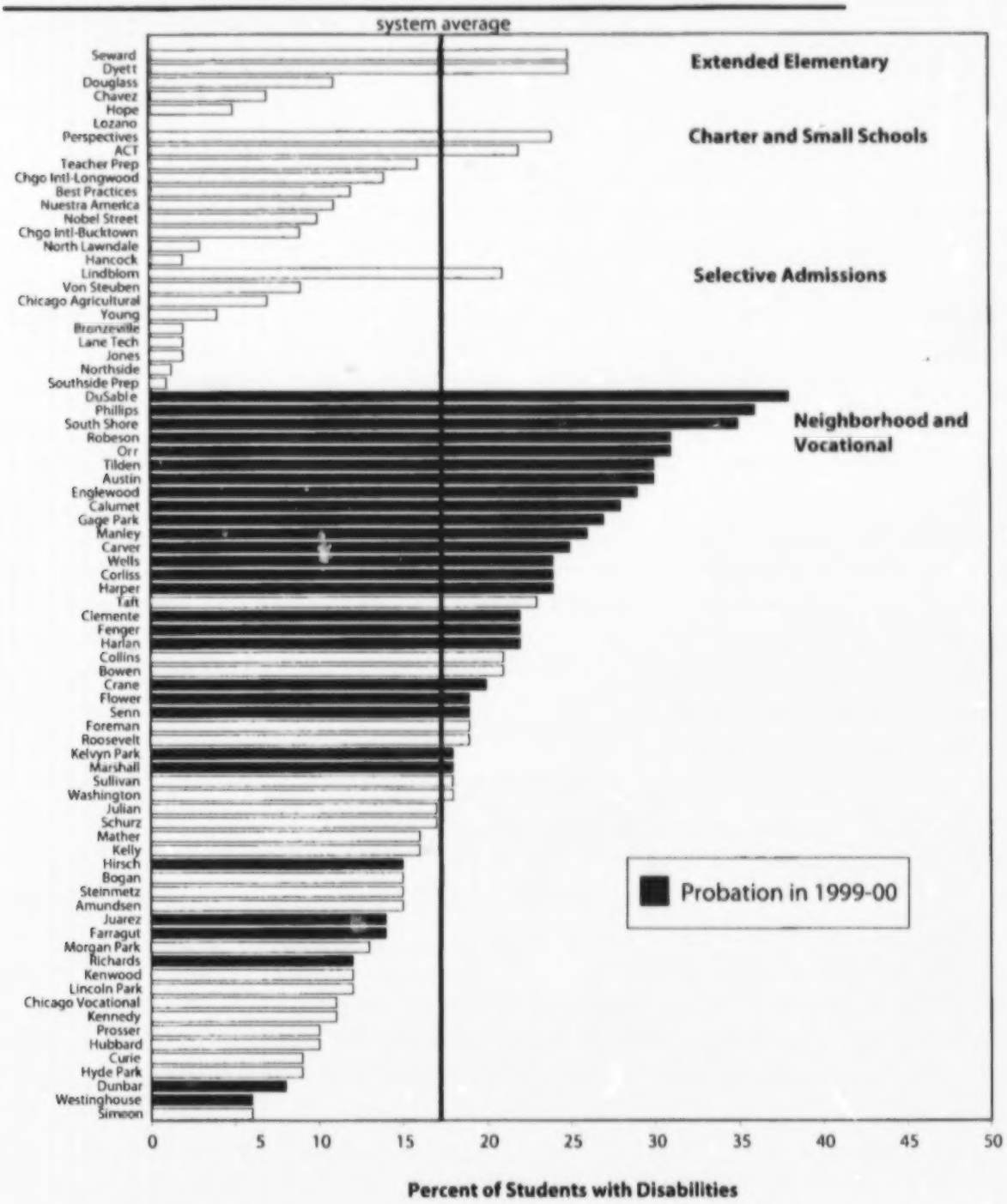
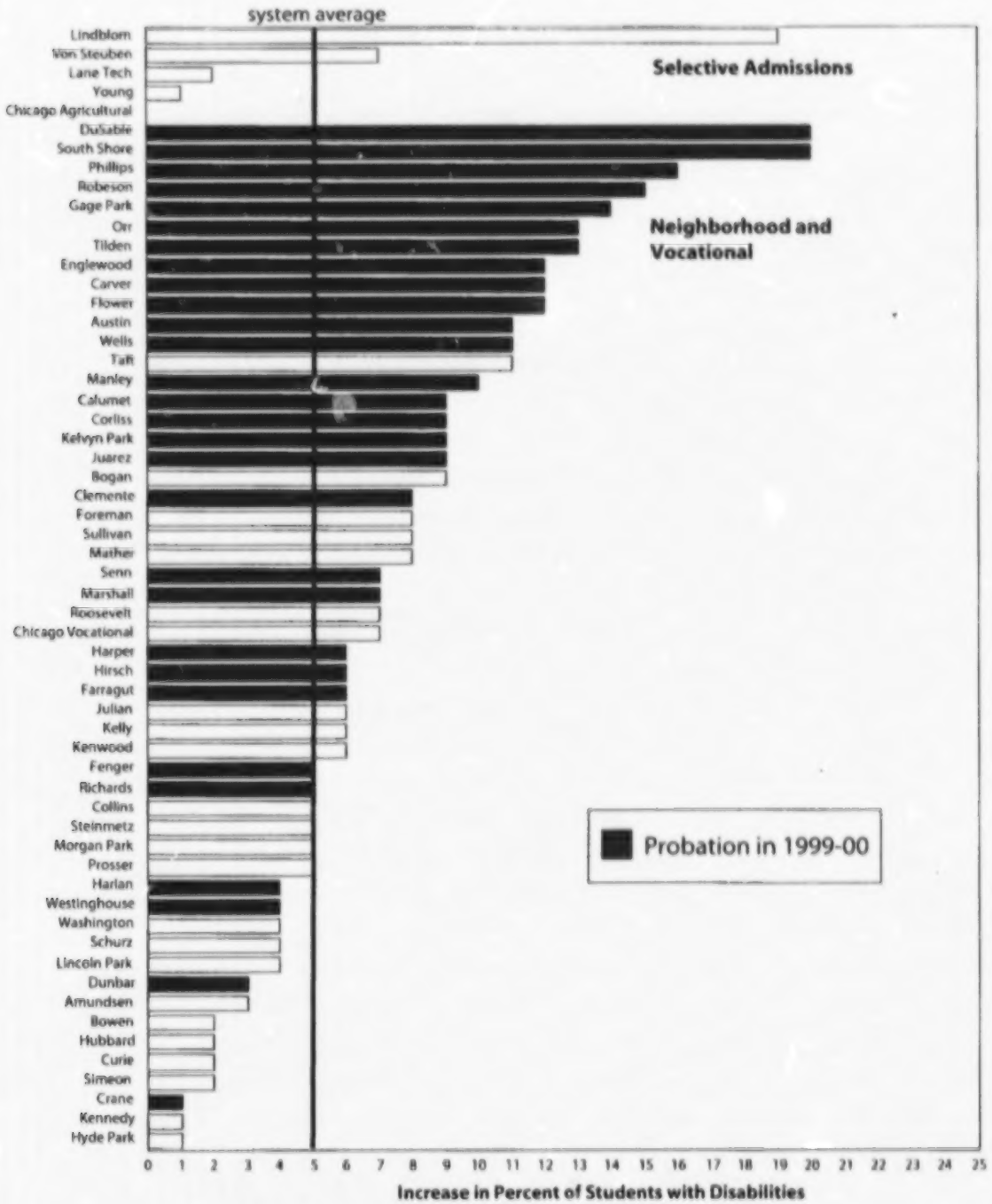


Figure 8

Increase in Percent of Students with Disabilities:
1993-94 to 1999-00



Note: Only those schools in operation throughout the period of this study are displayed here.

IV. The Story of Eleven Struggling High Schools

OVER THE COURSE OF THIS STUDY, NEIGHBORHOOD AND vocational schools enrolled about 89 percent of the system's total population of students with disabilities. Because of the systemwide rise in the number of students eligible for special education services, these schools experienced, on average, an increase of around 6 percent in their special education enrollments.

Within the group of neighborhood and vocational high schools, however, there was further inequitable distribution of students with disabilities. Of the 54 schools in this category, 14 saw increases of 10 percent or more in their enrollments of ninth graders with disabilities; others saw little or no change. Why were certain schools more affected than others?

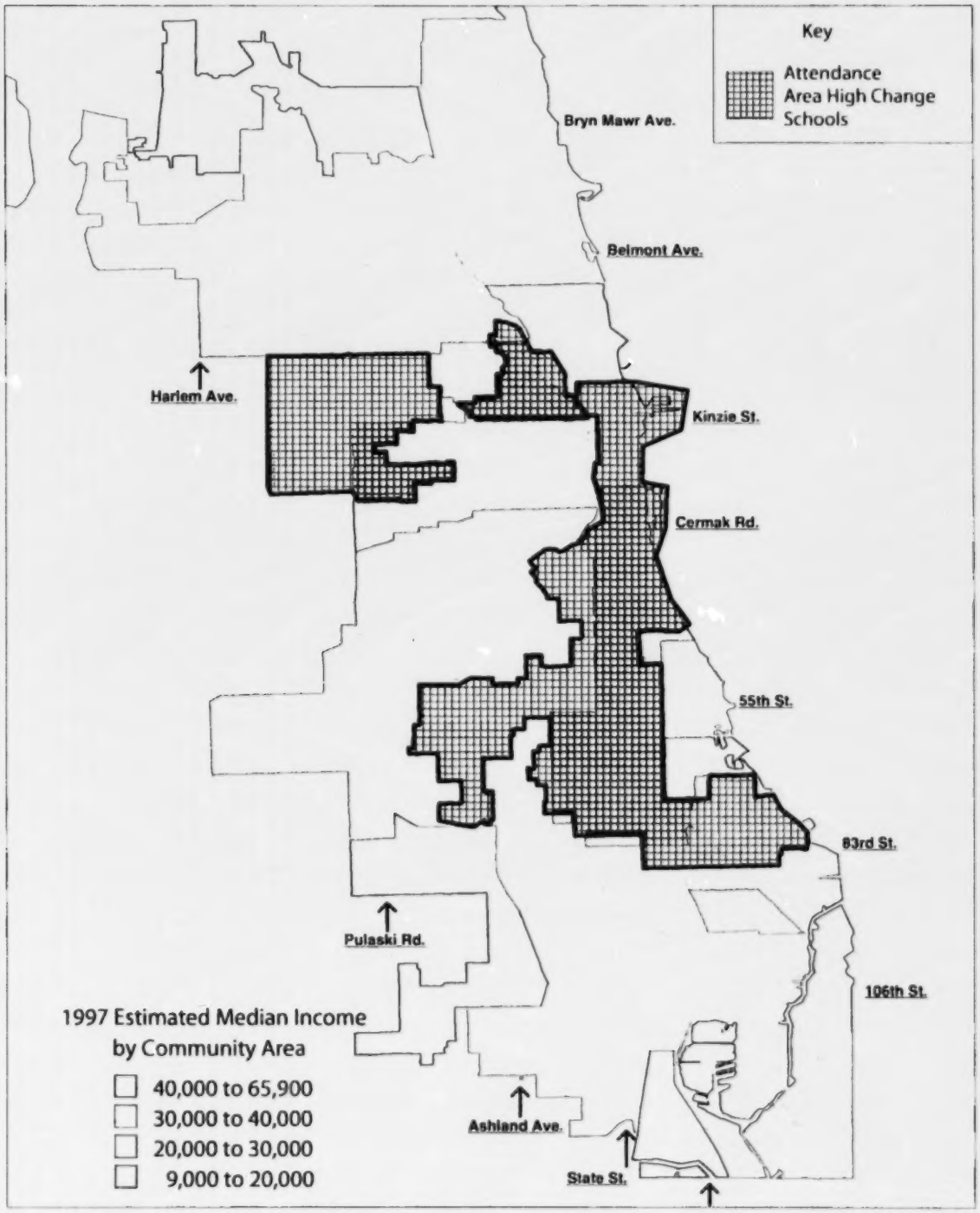
We studied 11 neighborhood high schools—Austin, DuSable, Englewood, Gage Park, Manley, Orr, Phillips, Robeson, South Shore, Tilden, and Wells—which experienced an increase of 10 percent or more in their populations of students with disabilities.[18] By 1999–00, on average, 30 percent of entering ninth graders attending these schools was eligible for special education services. Closer analysis of these schools shows that the rising percent of ninth graders with disabilities was attributable to two factors. Between the 1993–94 and 1999–00 school years, there was an increase in the number and percent of entering ninth graders with disabilities, and a corresponding decrease in the number and percent of entering general education ninth graders (see Appendix V). In this section, these schools are referred to as "high change schools."

Characteristics of the High Change Schools

Neighborhood high schools traditionally enroll students from their surrounding attendance areas. Students residing in a school's attendance area are by default assigned to that school unless they elect to enroll elsewhere.[19] Neighborhood high schools do not have any admissions requirements, although there may be requirements for magnet or specialty programs within the school. Ninety percent of the students who attended the high change schools resided in the attendance areas of the high change schools, and the attendance boundaries of all eleven were nearly contiguous. The schools primarily serve Chicago's low-income communities, running adjacent to State Street on the south side of Chicago and up Kinzie Street through the west side (see Figure 9). All eleven schools were on academic probation in 1999–00.[20] Because of the schools' proximity to each other, it is possible to compare changes in enrollment for the total attendance area. Students who live in the attendance areas of any of the schools are referred to as "area general education students" and "area students with disabilities."

Figure 9

Attendance Area of High Change Schools



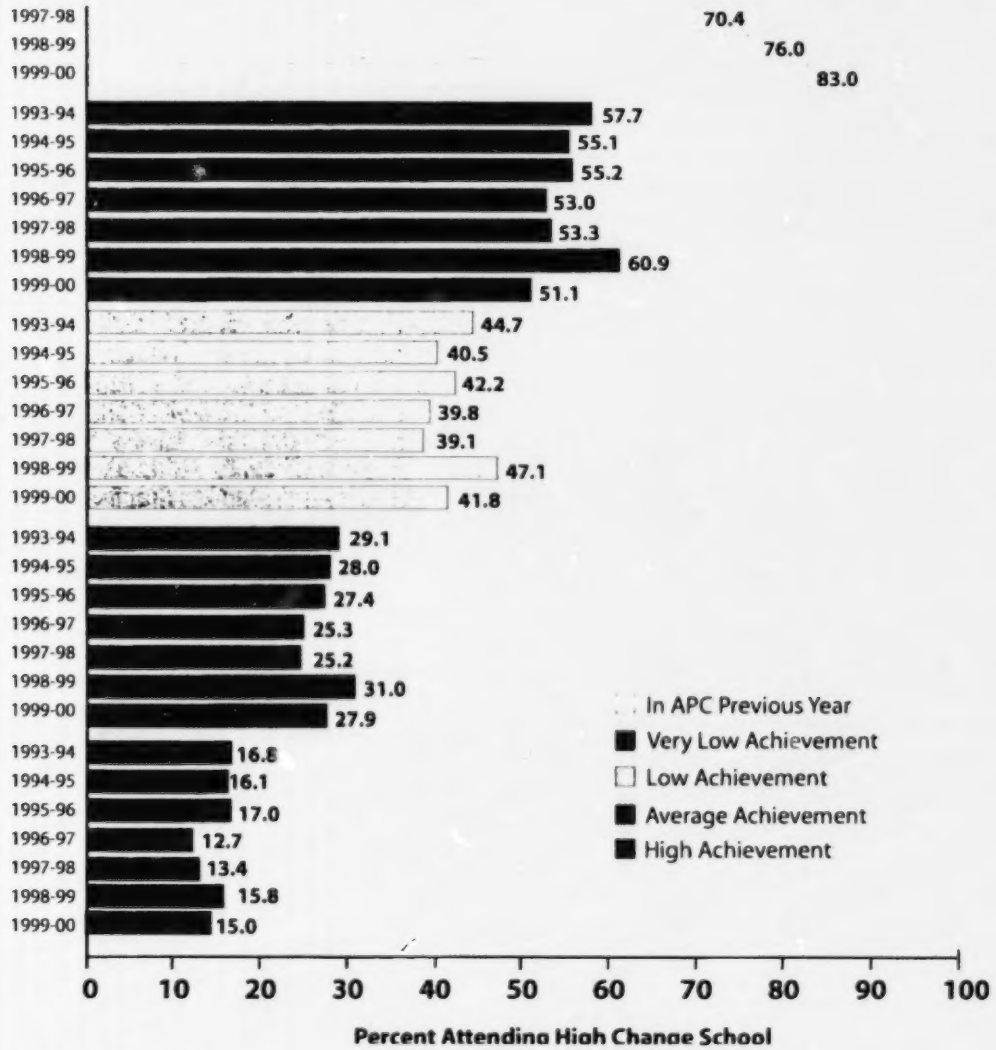
High Change Schools Traditionally Serve Low Achieving Students

Historically, the 11 high change schools served a low achieving student population. Area general education students who were low or very low achieving were more likely to attend their neighborhood high school than another school (see Figure 10). Average and high achieving students were less likely to attend a high change school, and frequently enrolled in a neighborhood or vocational high school outside of the attendance area. While the percent of average and high achieving students who enrolled in a high change school remained relatively steady over the period of this study, the percent of low and very low achieving students decreased.[21]

Higher Percent of Traditional Enrollment Retained. Although the likelihood of students from any different achievement category entering an attendance area school changed little, the number of students from each category that was eligible to enroll in ninth grade changed dramatically. The system's promotion policy had a sizable effect on the enrollment of low and very low achieving students. In fact, area general education students were far more likely to be retained than general education students in the system's other high schools. The retention rate for students living in the attendance area was similar to that for the rest of the system in the policy's first year, but it rose to 13 percent by 1999–00—about 4 percentage points higher than for students living outside the high change attendance area (see Figure 11). Although slightly higher than those for the rest of the city, retention rates for students with disabilities remained about the same throughout the period of this study and so did not affect the special education populations in these schools (see Appendix VI).

Figure 10

Low Achieving Students More Likely to Enroll in High Change School



Categorizing Students by Achievement

APC IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR—students attended an APC prior to enrolling in high school.

VERY LOW ACHIEVING—students scored two or more grade levels below the national norm on the eighth-grade ITBS reading test.

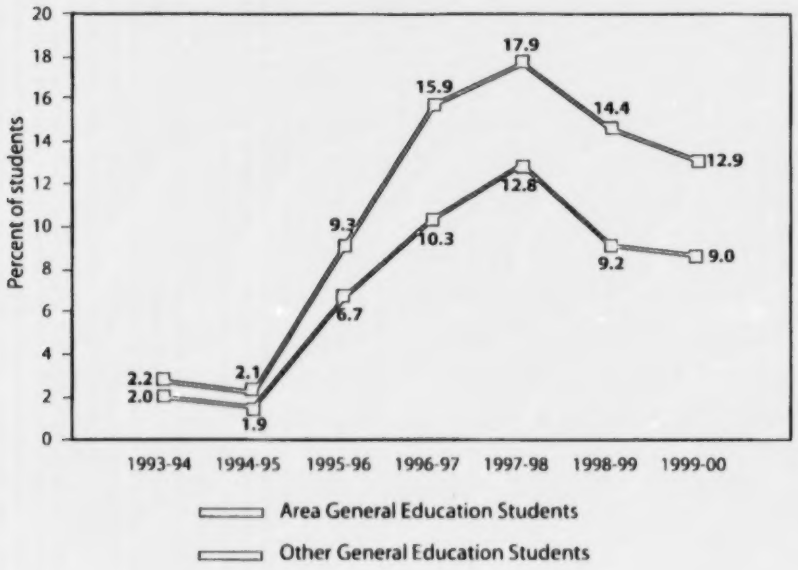
LOW ACHIEVING—students did not meet the cut-off score on the eighth-grade ITBS reading test.

AVERAGE—students scored slightly above or below grade level on the eighth-grade ITBS reading test.

HIGH ACHIEVING—students scored substantially above grade level on the eighth-grade ITBS reading test and qualified to apply to a selective admissions high school.

Figure 11

Greater Percent of General Education Eighth Graders Retained in Attendance Areas of High Change Schools



In 1995–96, the year prior to the promotion gate policy, almost all very low achieving eighth graders residing in the attendance area of a high change school were promoted. In 1996–97, however, only 52 percent of these students passed the eighth-grade promotion gate. In subsequent years, their promotion rate dropped to slightly below 50 percent.

Because low and very low achieving students comprised the bulk of the general education population enrolled in the high change schools, their declining rates of enrollment translated into sizable numerical drops. The number of very low achieving students attending attendance area schools fell by 922 students, from 1,256 in 1993-94, to 334 in 1999-00. The number of low achieving students enrolled fell by 401 students, from 991 to 590. At the same time, the number of average and high achieving general education students changed only slightly (see Figure 12).

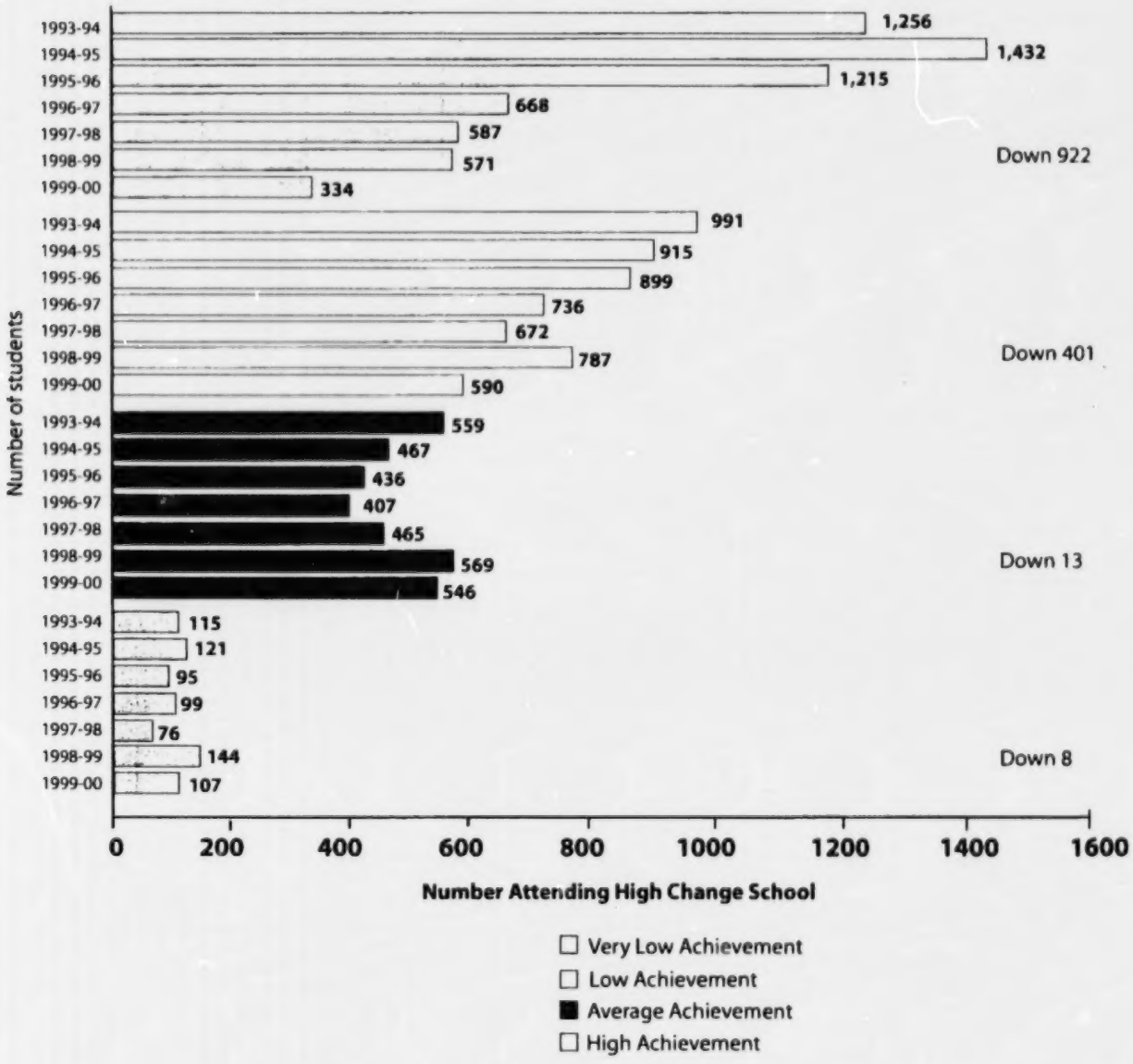
Larger Percent of Students with Disabilities in High Change Schools

Concurrent with the implementation of the system's promotion gate policy was the systemwide increase in the special education population (the relationship between these two phenomena is explained in detail in Section II). However, as with the higher rate of eighth-grade retention, students residing in the attendance area of the eleven high change schools were also more likely to be identified as having a disability than students in the rest of the city. The percent of area students eligible for special education services increased from 13 percent in 1993–94 to 18 percent in 1999–00. For the rest of the city, the increase was from 13 to 17 percent (see Figure 1 on page 11). Of great significance to the high change schools, however, was not just the increase in the number of students who were eligible for special education

services, but also the increase in the percent of that number that chose to enroll in their neighborhood school, which rose from 64 to 69 percent between 1993–94 and 1999–00. As a result, by 1999–00, area students with disabilities were twice as likely as area general education students to attend a high change school (see Figure 13).

Figure 12

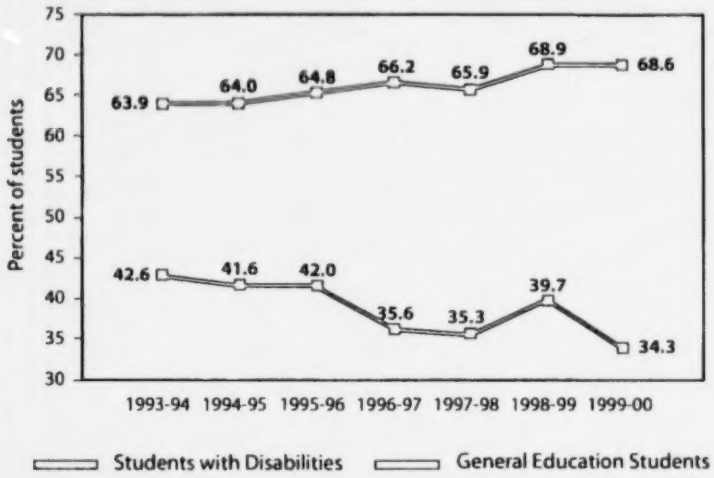
Drop in Low Achieving Students Drives Decline in General Education Enrollment



Note: In this analysis, APC students are included with very low achieving students.

Figure 13

Declining Percent of General Education Students Attend High Change Schools



V. Ninth Grade English Classrooms: A Snapshot of Classroom Integration

IN THE 1999–00 SCHOOL YEAR, APPROXIMATELY 4,300 entering ninth graders were eligible for special education services. This compares to 3,450 in 1993–94. The majority of these students enrolled in their neighborhood high schools, which have no entrance requirements and generally accept students from the surrounding community.

At the same time, these schools' traditional populations were changing. More and more of their general education ninth-graders were being retained under the system's policy to end social promotion. As a result, fewer general education students were attending their neighborhood schools. Combined with the rising number of incoming ninth graders with disabilities, some schools saw disproportionately high proportions of students eligible for special education services.

Concurrent with the change in high school student populations and the pooling of students with disabilities in their neighborhood high schools, in January 1998, the Chicago Reform Board of Trustees settled a six-year class action lawsuit brought on behalf of all students with disabilities in CPS schools (*Corey H. vs. the Chicago Board of Education*). The suit argued and the subsequent court ruling agreed that the Board had violated the right of all children with disabilities to be educated to the greatest extent possible with their non-disabled peers through the systematic separation of students with disabilities in special classes and schools.[22] According to the terms of its settlement, the Board must promote the education of students with disabilities according to the IDEA's least restrictive environment mandate.

Separation of Students into Special Classrooms

In the 1999–00 school year, the percentage of high school students with disabilities in special education schools was only 6 percent; the majority (87 percent) was enrolled in neighborhood and vocational high schools. These figures represent minimal change from those for 1993–94, with the exception that enrollment at special education schools dropped slightly (see Table 1 on page 19). When considering any possible change in the system's promotion of the least restrictive environment mandate, therefore, we have to look within schools to see how students with disabilities are being distributed in classrooms. To do so, we examine the degree to which ninth graders with learning disabilities are integrated in general education English classes (see Appendix VII for percent of students with learning disabilities in general education math, social science, and science classrooms).

We focus specifically on ninth-grade English classes for two reasons: whether or not they have a disability, all ninth graders in Chicago public high schools must take English; and English skills are critical to student's success in high school and beyond. We look only at students with learning

disabilities because they constitute the largest special education population and are more likely to be integrated in general education classrooms.[23] In Chicago, 70 percent of ninth graders eligible for special education services were classified as having a learning disability in 1999–00, and students with learning disabilities account for most of the overall increase in the percent of students with disabilities (see Figure 5 on page 15). In 1993–94, almost half of ninth graders with disabilities were enrolled in English classes where 30 percent or more of their classmates were general education students. It is worth noting that across the nation students with learning disabilities also participate in general education classrooms at higher rates than students with other types of disabilities.[24]

Defining General Education Classes

For the purpose of this analysis, we consider students to be enrolled in the same English class if they took English in the same school, in the same room, and at the same time (i.e., same "period").[25] According to the ISBE, a "regular classroom" is defined as a class in which 30 percent or less of the students have disabilities, it teaches the regular education curriculum, and it is not remedial.[26] Therefore, a classroom is considered "separate" if more than 30 percent of its students have a disability.[27] **Based on the ISBE definition, we use the 30 percent criterion to determine the percent of ninth graders with learning disabilities who took at least one English class in an integrated setting in the 1999–00 school year.**[28]

Educating Students in the Least Restrictive Environment: Inclusion and the IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees the right of all children with disabilities to have a free and adequate public education that is provided in accordance with each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). IEPs must be developed for each student, on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that,

> To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are non-disabled; and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.*

Over the last 25 years, the IDEA, coupled with the work of parents, educators, and advocacy groups, has substantially increased the degree to which students with disabilities are integrated into general education classrooms. Before the law was passed in 1975, most students with disabilities were taught in separate classrooms or schools. In contrast, recent research estimates that nationwide, "three-quarters of students with disabilities are being educated in regular education classrooms with non-disabled children for a significant part of the school day."‡

*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997.
‡American Youth Policy Forum and Center on Education Policy (2002), 20.

Figure 14

Increased Separation of Ninth Graders with Learning Disabilities in English Classes

At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that some CPS high schools have 20 to 30 percent of their entering ninth-grade population eligible for special education services (see Figure 7 on page 20) and it may be difficult for them to meet the legal 30 percent standard even if the majority of their students were in integrated English classrooms. In order to explore the extent to which ninth graders with learning disabilities were being educated completely separately from their non-disabled peers, we defined classrooms where 75 percent or more of the students had a disability as "completely separate." **Using the 75 percent criterion, we can determine whether ninth graders with learning disabilities are studying English in partially or totally separate settings.**

Severe and Increasing Separation

Over the period of this study, CPS high schools increasingly assigned ninth graders with learning disabilities to separate English classrooms (where 30 percent or more students have a disability). In 1993–94, 47 percent of all ninth graders with disabilities took an English class in a separate classroom (see Figure 14). By 1999–00, that percent had risen ten points, to 57 percent.

There is a similar increase when looking at the criterion of completely separate classrooms. In 1993–94, just over one-quarter of incoming ninth graders with learning disabilities were in English classes where 75 percent or more of their classmates had a disability. In 1999–00, however, that had jumped to nearly 40 percent—four out of 10 ninth graders with learning disabilities were being educated in completely separate English classrooms.[29]

Is There a Pattern Among Schools?

The degree to which ninth graders with learning disabilities were integrated into general education English classrooms varied across high schools. Taking the legal 30 percent standard, we look at levels of integration in each of the 58 high schools that were in operation in both 1993–94 and 1999–00. Schools with the highest proportion of entering ninth graders with disabilities were most likely to educate students with learning disabilities in separate classrooms and experience the largest increases in the rate of separation (see Figure 15).

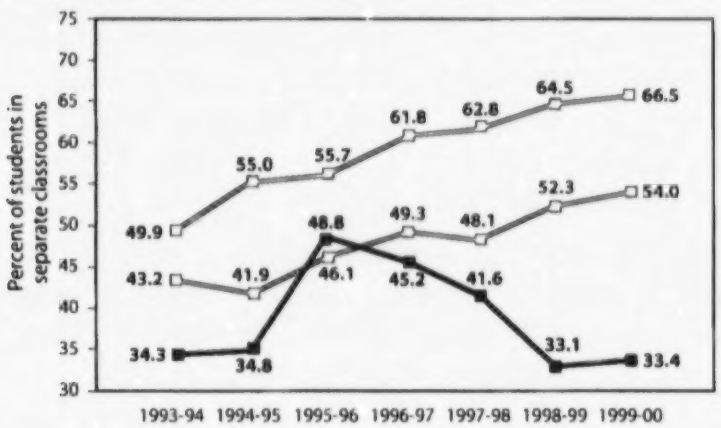
In the 21 high schools where 20 percent or more of the entering ninth-grade class was eligible for special education services in 1999–00, two-thirds of students with learning disabilities were educated in separate English classes, an increase of a full 17 percentage points since 1993–94. High schools serving the highest percentage of ninth graders with special needs educated the majority of students with learning disabilities in separate English classes.

Schools serving a moderate percent of students with disabilities (10 to 20 percent) in 1999–00 also increasingly separated students with learning disabilities into separate English classrooms, but to a lesser degree. Their percentage of ninth graders with disabilities in separate classrooms rose by 11 percentage points between the 1993–94 and 1999–00 school years, from 43 to 54 percent.

In contrast, schools with low percentages of students with disabilities (less than 10 percent) demonstrate a different pattern. Although the rate at which students with learning disabilities were educated in separate English classes jumped dramatically between 1994–95 and 1995–96, from 34 to 49 percent, the rate dropped to 1993–94 levels by 1999–00, when 33 percent of ninth graders were in separate English classrooms.

Figure 15

Schools with Higher Concentrations of Students with Disabilities Tend to Separate Students More
Ninth Graders



Schools with Over 20 Percent of Ninth Graders Eligible for Special Education Services in 1999-00

School with 10 to 20 Percent of Ninth Graders Eligible for Special Education Services in 1999-00

Schools with Less Than 10 Percent of Ninth Graders Eligible for Special Education Services in 1999-00

Note: A classroom is considered separate if 30 percent or more of students are eligible for special education services.

VI. Serving Students with Disabilities Under Chicago School Reform: Implications and Concerns

THIS REPORT SUGGESTS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN Chicago's promotion gate policy and the classification of students with disabilities. When sweeping reforms were adopted for elementary and secondary schools in the early and mid 1990s, the attention of the education community and the public was focused on improving student achievement and increasing educational opportunities.

Amidst the rising test scores, proliferation of school choice, and higher academic expectations, however, was a sharp increase in the special education population and the pooling of large numbers of students with disabilities in a few of the system's most struggling high schools just as those schools' general education populations were shrinking.

Our research shows that higher percentages of elementary school students were identified as eligible for special education services after they failed to pass the system's promotion gates in the third, sixth, and eighth grades. Thus identified, they were generally not subject to the same promotion requirements as general education students and were promoted to high schools at a higher rate. Meanwhile, many general education students were retained in the eighth grade or sent to APCs instead of high schools. As a result, by the 1999–00 school year, ninth-grade classes in Chicago public high schools had much higher concentrations of students with special needs than in 1993–94.

Concurrently, there was a proliferation of school choice for students—new magnet, charter, and extended elementary schools were pulling general education students away from their neighborhood high schools. Also, the system responded to its settlement of the Corey H. class action lawsuit, which argued that CPS was not educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, by encouraging students with disabilities to enroll in a high school other than a special education school or program.

Overall, neighborhood and vocational high schools experienced higher increases in their enrollments of students with disabilities than other types of schools. However, the combination of the increase in the special education population, rising retention rates for low achieving general education students, more school options, and the system's response to Corey H., produced dramatic increases in the percent of students with disabilities enrolling in a group of struggling high schools. In 1999–00, 11 high schools, all on probation, had, on average, entering ninth grades with special education populations of 30 percent—an increase of 10 percentage points or more above their 1993–94 rates. Clustered in some of the city's poorest neighborhoods, general education students in these schools' attendance areas were much more likely to be retained than students in the rest of the city. Because their enrollments traditionally comprised the very students that were now being retained, the size of the schools' general education

populations dropped sharply just as their special education populations rose.

When we looked within schools at the composition of first-year English classes, we found that students with disabilities were more likely to be educated separately from their non-disabled peers than previously. Focusing on ninth graders with learning disabilities, we measured this in two ways. First, we used the State of Illinois's definition of an integrated classroom as one made up of 30 percent or less students with disabilities. Next, we used a more extreme definition, calling a classroom integrated when 75 percent or less of the students were eligible for special education services. Using both the standard and extreme definitions, our data showed that as the percent of students with disabilities rose, ninth graders with learning disabilities were less likely to take English in an integrated setting in 1999–00 than 1993–94. This was especially true for students enrolled in high schools with high proportions of students with disabilities.

Issues for Further Consideration

This report establishes a set of benchmark indicators about the enrollment and distribution of students with disabilities in Chicago public high schools. It also calls attention to a number of important policy questions at both the elementary and high school levels. Since the system's adoption of the promotion policy, a growing number of elementary school students have been identified as having a disability in the third, sixth, and eighth grades. These students are disproportionately distributed among Chicago's high schools, sometimes to extremes. Educators and policymakers should consider the following questions when thinking about the impact of CPS reforms:

- Why are more students being identified as having a disability than before?
- Are special education services being adequately and effectively provided?
- Why are students classified so late in their elementary school careers and, in too many cases, only after they have been retained?
- How can high schools better respond to their growing populations of students with disabilities?

Why are more students being identified as having a disability than before?

There are several possible explanations for the rise in the identification of students with disabilities. First, because test scores for students with disabilities are not included in school and district reporting of student achievement, high stakes accountability may be providing an incentive for classifying low achieving students as eligible for special education services.[30] Second, students with disabilities are often not required to meet promotion gate cut-off scores. This raises additional issues about the effect of promotion gates on teachers' recommendation of students for special education assessment. Some may argue that teachers are having their academically weakest students assessed as a means of helping them bypass the promotion gate. Others may argue that a student's failure to pass a promotion gate may have the intended effect of calling attention to a previously unnoticed need. Furthermore, parents and teachers may seek special education services to provide a struggling student with extra assistance. The broad legal definition of a specific learning disability, which is currently being debated on the national level, allows for the potential over-classification of many low achieving students.

Although we do not have sufficient evidence to disentangle these interpretations, we can confirm that more students are being identified after they fail to pass a promotion gate. This suggests that school staff are not identifying students with

The broad legal definition of a specific learning disability, which is currently being debated on the national level, allows for the potential over-classification of many low achieving students.

special needs proactively, but rather are reacting to students' failure to meet the gate. Nonetheless, although the promotion gates may be helping teachers identify students in need of special services, the identification of students after they have been retained for a year does them a great disservice—not only is their test performance (on which promotion is heavily based) influenced by an unidentified disability, but they are classified as failing, delayed from school progression with their peers, and prevented for another year from receiving the services they are entitled to.

It is important to note also that although the percent and number of students eligible for special education services is rising, it remains unclear whether there has been any real change in the student population. That is, we cannot say whether there are more students with disabilities in CPS, or that students are being identified more than in the past.

Are special education services being adequately and effectively provided?

By the 1999–00 school year, almost 17 percent of all CPS eighth graders were eligible for special education services. Such a high rate means that educational opportunities for many low achieving CPS students now depend upon the quality of special education services they receive. Although our research does not address the quality of services provided, we can say that the shortage of special education teachers in Chicago (almost 400 vacancies in fall 2001), certainly calls into question the ability of schools to provide them.[31]

One factor driving the shortage of special education teachers is a decrease in the number of teachers pursuing special education certification. The number of teachers graduating with a bachelor's or master's degree in special education from a college or university in Illinois dropped by nearly 60 and 50 percent, respectively, between 1975 and 2000.[32] The shortage is not limited to Chicago; nearly 10 percent of special education teachers in the US did not hold certification in the 1997–98 school year.[33] Higher education institutions and policy makers need to offer incentives and opportunities for teachers to pursue both certification and training in special education and to teach in urban districts like Chicago where the most severe shortages are concentrated.

During the period of our study, Chicago's test-score-based accountability system did not hold schools accountable for the performance of students with disabilities. This raises the concern that improvements in general education programming might have been prioritized over those for special education. More research is needed to track whether students' performance improves after they have been classified as having a disability and that school reform efforts work equally to improve educational opportunities for students with disabilities.[34] A broad discussion of the quality and effect of special education services needs to be engaged.

Why are students being classified so late in their elementary school careers and, in too many cases, only after they have been retained?

The findings reported here suggest that too many CPS students are identified as having a disability in the sixth and eighth grades and in APCs. Research suggests that students who receive special education services early in their academic careers

have much better outcomes than students who are identified late.[35] Research also shows that identifying reading problems in kindergarten and providing assistance at that time substantially reduces the number of students requiring special education services later in elementary school.[36] Thus, the provision of academic interventions in the early grades may address students' needs before their long-term achievement is undermined. Effectively addressing the needs of students with disabilities requires reflection on how general education can be improved to better serve students before they fail.

How can high schools better respond to their growing populations of students with disabilities?

If the clustering of students with disabilities in separate classrooms is widely recognized as an ineffective educational strategy for most students, it is logical to question how schools where one-fourth to one-third of all incoming students are eligible for special education services can effectively educate their special education populations. A more even distribution of this population among all CPS high schools would help both general education and students with disabilities receive the education to which they are entitled. In order to accomplish this goal, new schools such as magnets and charters need to enroll higher percentages of students with disabilities. At the same time, Chicago—and the nation as a whole—must tackle the shortage of special education teachers. Nationally, nearly 98 percent of public schools report a shortage; as noted earlier, Chicago is no exception to this overall trend.[37] Also, improvements in general education such as early interventions, intensive reading assistance, and the use of tutors and classroom assistants for low-achieving students need to be explored to prevent the need to classify students as having a learning disability.

In addition, schools must support the professional development of general education teachers so that they can better instruct and integrate students with disabilities into their classrooms. Even with the funds and reform efforts garnered from the Corey H. settlement, this will not be easy for Chicago to do, especially in this time of constrained resources and multiple demands for major new initiatives. Such work, however, may pave the way for new teaching practices that will benefit all students. Whether an obstacle or an opportunity, the changing enrollments and distribution of students with special needs will undoubtedly lead to major changes in Chicago's high schools and will continue to provide information about the unanticipated results of promotion gate policies and other educational trends.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Sample for Each Analysis

Analysis	Sample	Reason
Percent of Eighth Graders Eligible for Special Education Services	Students enrolled in the eighth grade in May Students enrolled in an APC in May Eighth-grade students with disabilities for whom CPS pays tuition to attend a private school were excluded from sample	Eighth graders are students enrolled in a CPS school at the end of May who have the potential to enroll in high school the following fall. APC students were classified as eighth graders because they also had the potential to enroll in a high school if they met the eighth-grade promotion requirements. This sample includes students who left or dropped out of CPS between the eighth and ninth grade. Students with disabilities for whom CPS pays tuition to attend a private school were excluded from the analysis because they do not enroll in CPS high schools and their transition from eighth to ninth grade is not well documented in CPS masterfiles.
Percent of Entering Ninth Graders Eligible for Special Education Services	Eighth-grade or APC students enrolled in ninth grade for the first time Ninth-grade students who attended a non-CPS high school the previous May and enrolled in the ninth grade of a CPS high school the following September. *Ninth-grade students who were retained from the previous year were excluded from the sample*	This analysis focused on students entering high school for the first time, not students who were retained in the ninth grade.
Students Classified as Elgible for Special Education Services During the School Year	CPS students enrolled in September were tracked for a year to the following September *Students who left or dropped out of CPS, or entered CPS as a new student at some point after September were excluded from the sample*	Only students enrolled in a CPS school over a whole calendar year were included. Students entering or leaving the system may not have had time to be classified, or they may have entered the system with a previously undiagnosed disability.
Distribution of Students with Disabilities Across CPS High Schools	Eighth- and ninth-grade samples described above	Tracks the enrollment of entering ninth graders into CPS high schools
Area General Education Students and Area Students with Disabilities	Eighth-grade students who lived in the attendance areas of the 11 high change schools (see page 23 for a list of schools)	Analysis assessed how changes in the promotion rates and enrollment decisions of students living in the attendance areas of the high change high schools resulted in high concentrations of students with disabilities entering these schools. Factors such as eighth grade performance on the ITBS were examined. New students were excluded because we lack information on their eighth-grade performance and their high school enrollment decisions may be affected by a different set of factors.
Integration of Ninth-Grade Students with Learning Disabilities in English Classrooms	All CPS ninth-grade students including retained ninth graders	We include all ninth graders because they enroll in similar classes

Appendix II: Defining Students with Disabilities and Determining Their Grade in School

Students were considered eligible for special education services if they were classified as having a special educational need or disability (see note 2). CPS masterfile data only indicate that a student has been classified and does not provide any information on whether the student is receiving special education services, nor does it specify what type of services have been recommended in that child's IEP.

The vast majority of CPS students with disabilities, 85 percent or more during this period, were educated in graded classrooms. For these students, their grade level was extracted directly from CPS administrative files through the same process used for general education students. Between the 1993-94 and 1998-99 school years, the percent of students with disabilities educated in self contained and ungraded classrooms ranged from 11 to 15 percent. In 1999-00, this dropped to 1 percent, possibly in reaction to the Corey H. settlement.

Because a significant number of students with disabilities were not assigned to a grade between 1993-94 and 1999-00, and the majority of our analyses track students from the eighth to ninth grade, we had to design a strategy to estimate which ungraded students with disabilities were eighth graders. A two-step strategy was used. First, ungraded students were classified as eighth graders if they moved from an elementary school in May to a high school the following September and were of an age reasonable for an eighth grader. Second, analysis of the transition of ungraded students from elementary to high school revealed that the majority of ungraded students who were 13 years old (the average age for eighth graders) did not move from elementary to high school at that age. Therefore, ungraded students who were 13 years old or younger and remained in an elementary school instead of moving to a high school were not labeled eighth graders. All students who were 14 years or older, attended an elementary school in May, and still attended an elementary school the following year were considered eighth graders who were retained.

Percent and Number of Students with Disabilities Educated in Self-Contained and Ungraded Classrooms:
1993-2000

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Percent of Students with Disabilities Educated in Self-Contained and Ungraded Classrooms	15.5	13.9	12.8	12.5	11.7	10.5	1.0
Number of Students with Disabilities Educated in Self-Contained and Ungraded Classrooms	7241	6469	6081	6213	6052	5636	529

Appendix III: Impact of Student Transitions on Special Education Enrollment in Neighborhood and Vocational Schools

This appendix tracks the movement of eighth graders into ninth grade from the 1993-94 school year to 1999-00 to determine how different student transitions affected the percent of students with disabilities entering neighborhood and vocational high schools. The impact of the following four transitions on the concentration of ninth graders with disabilities is documented:

1. Eighth-grade students transferring out of CPS, or dropping out of school between eighth and ninth grade

2. Eighth-graders being retained or sent to APCs, and APC students being retained.

3. Students enrolling in the ninth grade of a CPS high school from other non-CPS public or private schools

4. Ninth-grade students enrolling in a different type of high school than their neighborhood or vocational school, such as selective admissions or charter

Each transition builds from the transition preceding it. For instance, the analysis of retention rates is only performed on area eighth graders who did not leave CPS or drop out and enrolled in a CPS school the following year. Similarly, new ninth graders are only added to the group of students who both stayed in CPS and were promoted to the ninth grade. Each transition is documented to show both the percent and number of students with disabilities.

Student Transitions from Eighth to Ninth Grade
1993-2000

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
8th Grade Enrollment in May							
General Education	27,829	28,485	26,779	25,662	25,277	26,453	24,854
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	4,148	4,593	4,579	4,398	4,581	5,005	5,052
Percent SWD	13.0%	13.9%	14.6%	14.6%	15.3%	15.9%	16.9%
Transition 1 8th Graders Leave System or Drop out							
General Education	(3,948)	(4,326)	(4,144)	(3,659)	(3,442)	(3,563)	(3,417)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(580)	(657)	(677)	(607)	(601)	(642)	(705)
Percent SWD	12.8%	13.2%	14.0%	14.2%	14.9%	15.3%	17.1%
8th Graders Remaining in System							
General Education	23,881	24,159	22,635	22,003	21,835	22,890	21,437
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	3,568	3,936	3,902	3,791	3,980	4,363	4,347
Percent SWD	13.0%	14.0%	14.7%	14.7%	15.4%	16.0%	16.9%
Transition 2 8th Graders Retained or Sent to APCs							
General Education	(567)	(495)	(440)	(1,652)	(2,646)	(3,300)	(2,321)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(252)	(286)	(260)	(245)	(367)	(363)	(336)
Percent SWD	30.8%	36.6%	37.1%	12.9%	12.2%	9.9%	12.7%
Students Eligible to Enroll in High School							
General Education	23,314	23,664	22,195	20,351	19,189	19,590	19,116
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	3,316	3,650	3,642	3,546	3,613	4,000	4,011
Percent SWD	12.5%	13.4%	14.1%	14.8%	15.9%	17.0%	17.3%
Transition 3 Students Transfer into System for 9th Grade							
General Education	3,316	3,299	3,611	3,557	3,217	3,116	2,927
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	137	217	288	252	278	246	296
Percent SWD	4.0%	6.2%	7.4%	6.6%	8.0%	7.3%	9.2%
All Students Enrolling in 9th Grade							
General Education	26,630	26,963	25,806	23,908	22,406	22,706	22,043
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	3,453	3,867	3,930	3,798	3,891	4,246	4,307
Percent SWD	11.5%	12.5%	13.2%	13.7%	14.8%	15.8%	16.4%
Transition 4 9th Graders Elect to Attend Schools Other than Neighborhood or Vocational							
General Education	(2,413)	(2,628)	(2,669)	(3,038)	(3,420)	(3,559)	(4,103)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(384)	(424)	(396)	(470)	(476)	(453)	(563)
Percent SWD	13.7%	13.9%	12.9%	13.4%	12.2%	11.3%	12.1%
Entering 9th Graders in Neighborhood and Vocational Schools							
General Education	24,217	24,335	23,137	20,870	18,986	19,147	17,940
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	3,069	3,443	3,534	3,328	3,415	3,793	3,744
Percent SWD	11.3%	12.4%	13.3%	13.8%	15.2%	16.5%	17.3%

Parentheses indicate that number is negative.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix IV: More Elementary Students Classified as Eligible for Special Education Services

After the promotion policy was implemented in the 1996–97 school year, the numer of students classified as eligible for special education services jumped in the gate grades.

Students Classified as Eligible for Special Education Services
1993-2000

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Grade 1	1003	1001	1133	1124	1016	958	975
Grade 2	796	1011	1028	1000	877	909	956
Grade 3 (Gate Grade)	**720**	**785**	**962**	**1011**	**1251**	**1407**	**1600**
Grade 4	504	558	649	692	402	365	623
Grade 5	363	368	421	512	417	317	336
Grade 6 (Gate Grade)	**302**	**292**	**359**	**549**	**582**	**621**	**731**
Grade 7	188	220	224	374	245	167	255
Grade 8 (Gate Grade)	**68**	**37**	**85**	**263**	**255**	**200**	**228**
APC Students	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	14	116	183

Appendix V: Impact of Area Student Transitions on Special Education Enrollment in High Change Schools

Similar to Appendix III, this appendix tracks the movement of students who lived in the attendance areas of the eleven high change high schools (see page 23 for a list of schools) from eighth to ninth grade between the 1993–94 and 1999–00 school years to determine how different transitions affected special education enrollment. The impact of the following four transitions on the concentration of ninth graders with disabilities in the high change schools is documented.

1. Area eighth-grade students transferring out of CPS, or dropping out of school between eighth and ninth grade

2. Area eighth graders being retained or sent to APCs, and APC students being retained

3. Area ninth graders enrolling in a different type of high school other than a neighborhood or vocational school, such as selective admissions or charter

4. Area ninth graders electing to attend other neighborhood or vocational high schools instead of the 11 high change schools

As with Appendix III, each transition builds from the transition preceding it. For instance, the analysis of retention rates is only performed on area eighth graders who did not leave CPS or drop out and enrolled in a CPS school the following year. New students were excluded from this analysis because we included eighth-grade test performance in our analysis to determine how performance related to area students' enrollment decisions.

Area Student Transitions from Eighth to Ninth Grade
1993-2000

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Area 8th Grade Enrollment in May							
General Education	8,924	9,410	8,469	7,791	7,904	8,271	7,378
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	1,381	1,638	1,562	1,385	1,549	1,656	1,652
Percent SWD	13.4%	14.8%	15.6%	15.1%	16.4%	16.7%	18.3%
Transition 1 Area 8th Graders Leave System or Drop out							
General Education	(963)	(1,105)	(1,051)	(847)	(861)	(873)	(774)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(159)	(211)	(216)	(138)	(203)	(172)	(186)
Percent SWD	14.2%	16.0%	17.1%	14.0%	19.1%	16.5%	19.4%
Area 8th Graders Remaining in System							
General Education	7,961	8,305	7,418	6,944	7,043	7,398	6,604
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	1,222	1,427	1,346	1,247	1,346	1,484	1,466
Percent SWD	13.3%	14.7%	15.4%	15.2%	16.0%	16.7%	18.2%
Transition 2 Area 8th Graders Retained or Sent to APCs							
General Education	(240)	(179)	(154)	(647)	(1,117)	(1,324)	(950)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(114)	(118)	(107)	(96)	(159)	(146)	(137)
Percent SWD	32.2%	39.7%	41.0%	12.9%	12.5%	9.9%	12.6%
Area Students Eligible to Enroll in High School							
General Education	7,721	8,126	7,264	6,297	5,926	6,074	5,654
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	1,108	1,309	1,239	1,151	1,187	1,338	1,329
Percent SWD	12.6%	13.9%	14.6%	15.5%	16.7%	18.1%	19.0%
Transition 3 Area 9th Graders Electing to Attend Schools Other than Neighborhood or Vocational							
General Education	(394)	(447)	(416)	(587)	(574)	(624)	(842)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(117)	(140)	(119)	(152)	(127)	(134)	(163)
Percent SWD	22.9%	23.9%	22.2%	20.6%	18.1%	17.7%	16.2%
Area 9th Graders Enrolling in Neighborhood and Vocational Schools							
General Education	7,327	7,679	6,848	5,710	5,352	5,450	4,812
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(991)	1,169	1,120	999	1,060	1,204	1,166
Percent SWD	11.9%	13.2%	14.1%	14.9%	16.5%	18.1%	19.5%
Transition 4 Area 9th Graders Enrolling in Neighborhood or Vocational School Outside Attendance Area							
General Education	(4,206)	(4,482)	(3,969)	(3,675)	(3,463)	(3,288)	(3,162)
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	(358)	(421)	(394)	(338)	(361)	(375)	(366)
Percent SWD	7.8%	8.6%	9.0%	8.4%	9.4%	10.2%	10.4%
Area 9th Graders Enrolling in High Change Schools							
General Education	3,121	3,197	2,879	2,035	1,889	2,162	1,650
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	633	748	726	661	699	829	800
Percent SWD	16.9%	19.0%	20.1%	24.5%	27.0%	27.7%	32.7%

Parentheses indicate that number is negative.

Appendix VI: Percent of Eighth Graders with Disabilities Retained: 1993 to 2000

Students with disabilities living in the attendance areas of the 11 high change high schools (see page 23 for a list of school names) were retained at a slightly higher rate than students with disabilities in other parts of the city.

Percent of Students Retained following School Year:
1993-2000

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
8th Graders with Disabilities Living in Attendance Areas of High Change Schools	8.3	8.0	7.7	11.8	9.8	9.4	5.8
8th Graders with Disabilities Living Outside of the Attendance Areas of High Change Schools	6.7	6.0	5.9	7.9	7.6	6.9	4.2

Appendix VII: Percent of Ninth Graders with Learning Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: Core Academic Subjects

In Section V of this report, we examine the percentage of ninth graders with learning disabilities enrolled in general education English classes. We measured classroom integration using two standards: the legal standard adopted by the ISBE that a separate classroom has a special education population of 30 percent or more; and a more extreme standard where a "completely" separate classroom has a special education population of 75 percent or more. We apply these same two standards here when looking at the enrollment of ninth graders with learning disabilities in the other three core academic subjects.

Percent of Ninth Graders with Learning Disabilities in Classes with 30 Percent or More Special Education Enrollment:
1993-2000

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Math	46.9	47.9	52.5	58.0	57.9	55.0	58.6
Social Science	36.9	32.3	36.8	42.0	45.1	45.7	52.9
Science	34.8	35.3	38.5	47.4	45.6	50.2	53.9

Percent of Ninth Graders with Learning Disabilities in Classes with 75 Percent or More Special Education Enrollment:
1993-2000

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Math	25.6	22.6	27.1	33.9	35.8	36.2	40.1
Social Science	23.7	22.7	25.2	29.2	25.3	26.1	31.2
Science	17.6	19.3	22.3	24.9	22.7	22.6	29.2

Endnotes

[1] National Academy of Sciences (2001).

[2] This report uses the terms "students eligible for special education services," "students with disabilities," and "students with special needs" interchangeably to describe students who have been evaluated for special education services, deemed eligible, and provided with an IEP. We do not know whether these services were actually provided.

[3] Bryk et al. (1998) and Sebring et al. (1996).

[4] Allington and McGill-Franzen (1992) argue that the validity of standardized tests is undermined when a growing percent of students are classified as disabled because the test scores of students with disabilities, usually low-performing students, are routinely exempted from student and school accountability measures. Although this may be true, *Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes* (2002) found that students passed classes and took more advanced classes at a higher rate even when including students with disabilities.

[5] Between the 1994–95 and 1999–00 school years, CPS paid for approximately 500 to 600 students with disabilities to attend private schools. This is a slight increase from 1993–94, when only about 400 students received tuition. These students were not included in either our system or school analyses because we were unable to consistently track their transition from elementary to high school and are uncertain about the accuracy of the data. Because the percent of eighth-grade students receiving private school tuition between 1993–94 and 1999–00 remained relatively steady (fluctuating between 1.2 and 1.9 percent of all eighth graders), excluding these data does not mask any change in the percent of eighth graders classified as having a disability.

[6] In this section, "ninth grader" refers to students who enrolled in the ninth grade for the first time and to ninth graders entering the system. With the exception of our analysis of classroom integration, retained ninth graders were excluded because we wanted to examine how the composition of CPS high school enrollments changed over time. See Appendix I for a detailed description of the sample group for each analysis.

[7] See Appendix III for exact numbers. See also the series report *Declining High School Enrollment: An Exploration of Causes*.

[8] In the 1993–94 school year, approximately 4 percent of students who transferred into a CPS high school from outside the system were identified as eligible for special education services. This had doubled by 1995–96, when almost 8 percent of transfers were eligible. This increase had only a minimal impact on the percent of ninth graders with disabilities between 1994 and 1996. See Appendix III.

[9] A promotional gate for just eighth graders was implemented at the end of the 1995-1996 school year; this was one year before promotional gates were implemented in the third and sixth grades.

[10] National Academy of Sciences (2001).

[11] In this analysis, eighth graders and students attending APCs were separated because the rate at which they were classified as disabled during the school year was different.

[12] Lyon et al. (2001).

[13] Lyon et al. (2001); McLaughlin (2002).

[14] When looking at retained eighth graders, we include both those students who were retained and those who were enrolled in APCs.

[15] Roderick et al. (1999). See also the series report *Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes* (2002).

[16] Schools that changed from neighborhood to selective admissions schools between 1993 and 2000 were excluded from analysis. Alternative schools were also excluded because they generally enroll students after they have left traditional high schools.

[17] As part of a legal obligation to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, several schools that traditionally served predominantly students with disabilities enrolled slightly fewer students, 260 in 1999-00 versus 290 in 1993-94. As a result, at a time when the number of ninth graders eligible for special education services was increasing, a smaller percent was attending special education schools.

[18] One vocational school, Flower Career Academy, also experienced over a 10 percent increase in its special education population. We do not include this school in our analysis because vocational schools do not have explicit attendance areas.

[19] Thirteen neighborhood schools met the criteria of having more than a 10 percent increase in their population of entering ninth graders with disabilities. We include only the 11 that are nearly contiguous in our sample because we can treat all of their students as part of a single large neighborhood. One of the two excluded schools, Carver Military Academy, is on the far south side of the city, and the other, Taft High School, is on the far north side. The reasons for the increase at Carver are similar to those for the increases in the 11 high change schools. The reasons for the increase at

Taft are school-specific and are almost entirely the result of the pull of general education students away from the school to the new Northside College Preparatory regional magnet high school.

[20] In 1999–00, under the system's probation policy, schools in which less than 15 percent of students met national norms on the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency faced probation. Schools on probation were monitored until test scores exceeded the threshold or they showed significant improvement in five essential areas: school leadership, professional development and training, instructional program, learning environment, and parent and community relations. Probation schools received approximately $100,000 in additional funds, an external partner from the educational community, and, in some cases, a business manager to help manage day-to-day affairs. Schools failing to make adequate progress under probation faced the possibility of reconstitution, re-engineering, or intervention.

[21] The category, "Former APC Students" was created in the 1997–98 school year after the creation of APCs. In the 1998–99 school year, enrollment rates across achievement categories increased. More research is needed to understand this phenomenon.

[22] The plaintiffs also charged the ISBE for failing to end this practice, and in February 1998 the court ruled on behalf of the plaintiffs against the ISBE.

[23] It is important to note that placement of students in a general education setting is determined on a case-by-case basis according to each student's IEP, and not by the classification of the student's disability. Because we did not have each student's IEP, we had to rely on general classifications (i.e., "learning disability") to produce this analysis.

[24] American Youth Policy Forum and Center on Education Policy (2002).

[25] A very small number of classrooms had to be further subdivided by teacher or section because each section or teacher in the classroom served 15 or more students. Also, classrooms with fewer than five students were excluded from the analysis because they were considered individual tutoring or administrative mistake and not an English class per se.

[26] Soltman and Moore (2000).

[27] We did not have information on whether the curriculum taught was general or remedial. Therefore, we had to define classrooms only by student composition. Ideally, both pieces of information would be used to define general education classrooms.

[28] The US Department of Education, NCES uses an alternative method in *The Condition of Education 2001*. In that report, the integration of students with disabilities is measured by the percent of their day spent in general education classrooms. This standard, however, can mask students' lack of integration in core academic classes if they take all of their elected courses in general education classrooms, but all of their core courses in separate classrooms.

[29] In general, these classes were much smaller than general education English classes, with an average of 12 students (versus 24 for general education).

[30] Allington and McGill-Franzen (1992) and McGill-Franzen and Allington (1993).

[31] Chicago Public Schools (2001).

[32] State Board of Higher Education data request made by CPS.

[33] American Youth Policy Forum (2002).

[34] Research conducted both nationally and in Chicago has criticized the inability of special education services to raise the achievement levels of students with disabilities or even result in lower achievement. See Lyon et al. (2001) and Reynolds and Wolfe (1999).

[35] National Academy of Sciences (2001).

[36] Lyon et al. (2001).

[37] Boyer (2001) and the National Council for Exceptional Children (1997).

References

Allington, Richard L. and Anne McGill-Franzen. (1992). Unintended effects of educational reform in New York. *Educational Policy*, 6(4), 397-414.

American Youth Policy Forum and Center on Education Policy. (2002). *Educating Children with Disabilities: The Good News and the Work Ahead.* Washington, DC: Author.

Bryk, Anthony S., Penny Bender Sebring, David Kerbow, Sharon Rollow, and John Q. Easton (1998). *Charting Chicago School Reform: Democratic Localism as a Lever for Change.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Chicago Public Schools. (2001). Board report no. 01-1219-RS23. Chicago: Chicago Public Schools.

Corey H. et al. v. The Board of Education of the City of Chicago et al. (1998). 955 F. Supp. 900. United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division.

Illinois State Board of Education, Special Education Compliance Division. (2001). *A Parent's Guide to the Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities.* Springfield, IL: Author.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. US Public Law 10517. 105th Cong., 1st sess., 4 June 1997.

Lyon, G. Reid, Jack M. Fletcher, Sally E. Shaywitz, Bennett A. Shaywitz, Joseph K. Torgesen, Frank B. Wood, Ann Shulte, and Richard Olson. (2001). Rethinking learning disabilities. In Chester E. Finn Jr., Andrew J. Rotherham, and Charles R. Hokanson, Jr. (Eds.), *Rethinking Special Education for a New Century.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the Progressive Policy Institute.

McGill-Franzen, Anne and Richard L. Allington. (1993). Flunk'em or get them classified: The contamination of primary grade accountability data. *Educational Researcher*, January-February, 19-22.

McLaughlin, Margaret J. (2002). Issues for consideration in the reauthorization of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In *A Timely IDEA: Rethinking Federal Education Programs for Children with Disabilities.* Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy.

National Academy of Sciences, Committee on Minority Representation in Special Education. (2001). *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

National Center for Education Statistics. US Department of Education. (2002). *The Condition of Education 2002.* NCES no. 2002-025. Washington, DC: GPO.

Reynolds, Arthur J. and Barbara Wolfe. (1999). Special education and school achievement: An exploratory analysis with a central-city sample. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 21(3), 249-269.

Roderick, Melissa, Anthony S. Bryk, Brian A. Jacob, John Q. Easton, and Elaine Allensworth. (1999). *Ending Social Promotion: Results from the First Two Years.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Sebring, Penny Bender, Anthony S. Bryk, Melissa Roderick, Eric Camburn, Stuart Luppescu, Yeow Meng Thum, BetsAnn Smith, and Joseph Kahne. (1996). *Charting Reform in Chicago: The Students Speak*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Soltman, Sharon Weitzman and Donald R. Moore. (2000). Ending illegal segregation of Chicago's students with disabilities: Strategy, implementation, and implications of the Corey H. lawsuit. Paper prepared for the Minority Issues in Special Education conference hosted by the Civil Rights Project of Harvard University, November, Cambridge, MA.

Notes

About the Authors

Shazia Rafiullah Miller holds joint responsibilities at the Consortium as a Research Associate and the Head of Research Outreach. As a researcher, Dr. Miller focuses on studying high schools. In her outreach capacity, she explains Consortium findings and promotes their use in improving schools. Dr. Miller received her Ph.D. in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University, and her B.A. in Political Science, also from Northwestern.

Robert M. Gladden is a Research Analyst at the Consortium. He has worked on the Bank Street Study of Small Schools and various Consortium projects. His current research focuses on school safety and the community context of schools. Mr. Gladden is a doctoral candidate at the City University of New York, Graduate Center in Social/Personality Psychology. He received his B.A. from Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

Steering Committee

Victoria Chou, Co-Chair
University of Illinois at Chicago

James H. Lewis, Co-Chair
Roosevelt University

Institutional Members

Chicago Teachers Union
Deborah Lynch Walsh

Chicago Principals and Administrators Association
Beverly Tunney

Chicago Public Schools
Christy Carter
for the Chicago Board of Education

Olivia Watkins
for the Chief Executive Officer

Philip Hansen
Accountability Office

Illinois State Board of Education
Connie Wise
for the Superintendent

Individual Members

John Ayers
Leadership for Quality Education

Gina Burkhardt
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

Michael E. Carl
Northeastern Illinois University

Louis M. Gomez
Northwestern University

Anne C. Hallett
Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform

G. Alfred Hess, Jr.
Northwestern University

Rachel W. Lindsey
Chicago State University

George Lowery
Roosevelt University

Angela Perez Miller
DePaul University

Donald R. Moore
Designs for Change

Sharon Ransom
University of Illinois at Chicago

Barbara A. Sizemore
DePaul University

James Spillane
Northwestern University

Linda S. Tafel
National-Louis University

Consortium on Chicago School Research

Mission

The Consortium on Chicago School Research is an independent federation of Chicago area organizations that conducts research on ways to improve Chicago's public schools and assess the progress of school improvement and reform. Formed in 1990, it is a multipartisan organization that includes faculty from area universities, leadership from the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Teachers Union, education advocacy groups, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, as well as other key civic and professional leaders.

The Consortium does not argue a particular policy position. Rather, it believes that good policy is most likely to result from a genuine competition of ideas informed by the best evidence that can be obtained.

Directors

Anthony S. Bryk
University of Chicago

John Q. Easton
Consortium on Chicago School Research

Albert L. Bennett
Roosevelt University

Sarah-Kay McDonald
Consortium on Chicago School Research

Melissa Roderick
University of Chicago

Penny Bender Sebring
University of Chicago

Mark A. Smylie
University of Illinois at Chicago

Consortium on Chicago School Research
1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637
773-702-3364 fax -773-702-2010
www.consortium-chicago.org

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").